

WILD WEST



WEEKLY



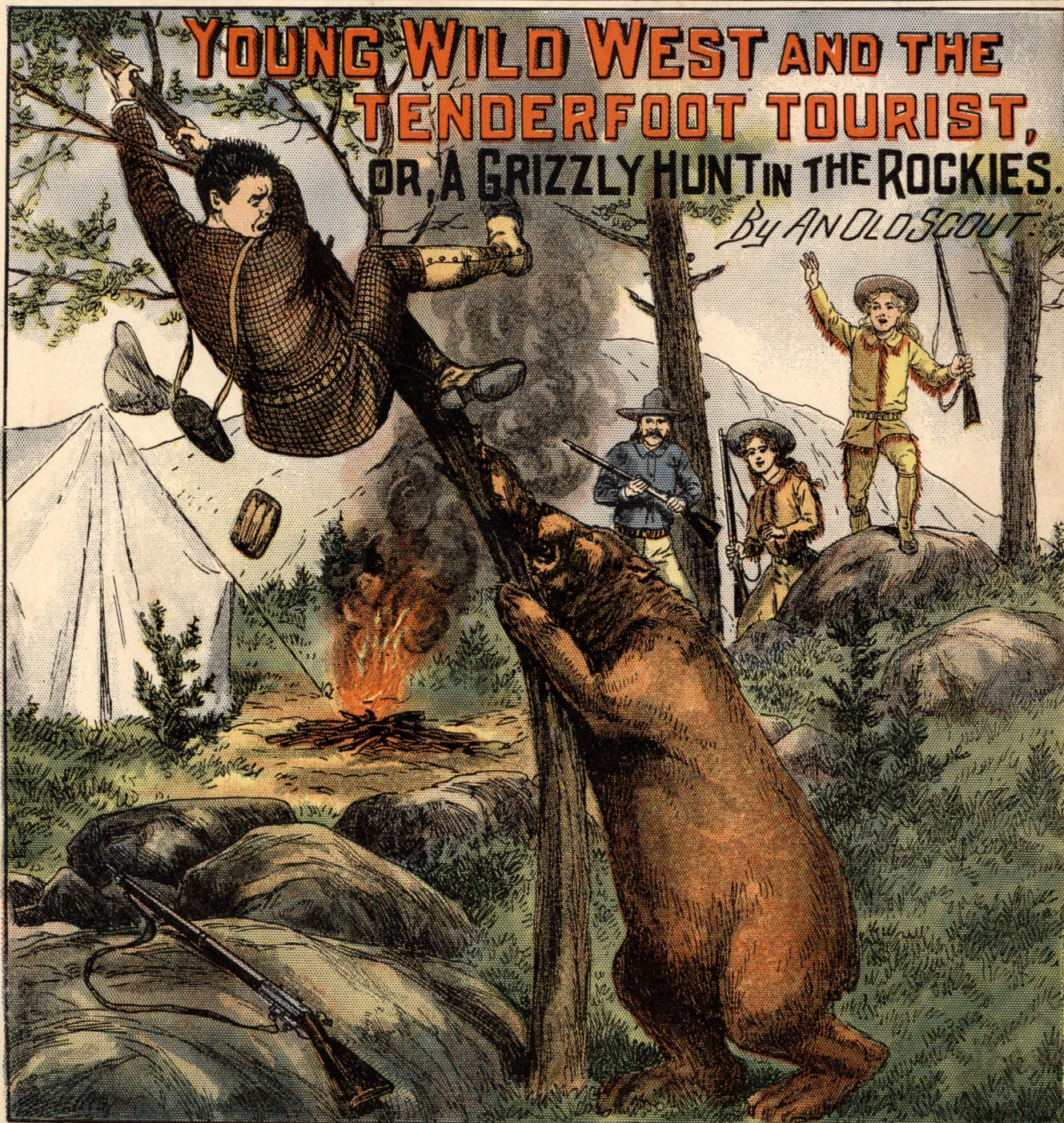
A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE TENDERFOOT TOURIST

—OR—

A Grizzly Hunt in the Rockies

BY AN OLD SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.

THE TENDERFOOT AND THE GRIZZLY.

"There's ther tracks of a grizzly, or I'll eat my hat!"

"Right you are, Charlie. There is no mistaking that. Looks as though it might be a big fellow, too."

"And the tracks are fresh, too. We must be pretty close to him."

The first speaker was Cheyenne Charlie, the famous scout and Indian fighter, and his remarks were addressed to Young Wild West, the dashing boy-hero of the Wild West, and his sweetheart, Arietta Murdock.

The three had just emerged from a dense thicket in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, in the southern part of the State of Colorado, near the boundary line of New Mexico, and the scout, who was slightly in advance, had seen the footprints of a grizzly.

Cheyenne Charlie had a fondness for hunting bears, and, even though the meat of an old grizzly was not fit to eat, he always made it a point to get one of them if it came his way.

Attired in their fancy hunting costumes of buckskin, the three looked picturesque enough in their wild surroundings.

Being the recognized Champion Deadshot of the West, and commonly known as the Prince of the Saddle, Young Wild West was without doubt the greatest character in the Wild West at the time of which we write, which was a few years ago, when that vast region of our land was in a less populated condition than at present.

Cool and daring at all stages of the game and with a determination always to do right, our dashing young hero had made a name for himself in his exploits in the wildest parts of the country, where all sorts of dangers

abounded, and he was loved by his friends and feared by his enemies.

It was near the close of a day rather late in the fall of the year, and the three had left their camp, which was only located about three hundred yards from where they came upon the grizzly's tracks, for the express purpose of shooting something for breakfast.

Young Wild West and his friends were on their way to a mining camp in the southwestern part of Colorado, and they had camped in the mountains for a day or two for the purpose of doing a little in the line of hunting.

They could not have found a better spot for this purpose, no matter where they might have gone, and though they had no use for the grizzly, other than that the pelt might bring something at the first town they struck, they were anxious to track him to his lair and get him.

They started to follow the tracks, and, finding that they led across a short open stretch, they hurried along and soon entered a thicket again.

It was nothing more than a narrow belt, however, and one through it they came to a spot where the ground was hard and stony, and the bear tracks no longer visible.

It was just then that they heard a noise off to the right.

"You can bet that is no bear," said Young Wild West. "That is a human being, as sure as anything."

They paused, and after a wait of perhaps half a minute the form of a young man, attired in a flaring costume, such as tourists sometimes wear, came in view.

One glance at him told our three friends that he was a genuine tenderfoot.

His loud, checkered suit, leggings and tourist cap showed that he went according to the style as laid down by the tourists who occasionally came to hunt in the Rockies under the direction of experienced guides and

hunters, who made more money in that way than any other.

He carried a rifle in his hands, and stuck in the cartridge belt he wore about his waist was a long-bladed hunting knife.

Over his shoulder hung a pair of field glasses, which he had no doubt brought with him for the purpose of locating game in the distance.

"Why, hello!" he exclaimed, in astonishment, as he came to a halt and stared at Young Wild West and his two companions. "By jove! I never expected to meet any one here, outside of my cousin and our hired man. I didn't know this place was inhabited."

"Well, you will find that it is not largely inhabited, I reckon," answered our hero, smiling at the young man's apparent innocence. "You are here on a hunting trip, I presume?"

"Yes, that's right. I'm making a tour of the West, you know. My cousin, who lives in Colorado, about fifty miles from here, brought me out on a week's hunting trip, and when that is over I am going further up the line of the Rocky Mountains. My father died recently, and he left me a considerable sum of money. I made up my mind that before I settle down and go in business I will see something of my country. I thought the West contained the most to see, so I came out to my cousin right away."

The young man was very talkative now, and, coming nearer, he tipped his hat to Arietta and continued:

"If I am not too bold, I would like to ask if you live around these parts?"

"Go ahead an' ask," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie, before our hero could answer. The scout had a way of generally speaking what he thought, and he could not help it just then.

The tenderfoot looked at him and smiled.

"You are a genuine Westerner, I can see that," he said. "Well, I will ask the question, then. Do you live in these parts?"

"Only when we happen to come along this way," Wild replied, smiling at him, for he could tell that the young man was anything but a fool, even if he was using up some of the money his father had left him for the purpose of seeing the West. "Our home is anywhere in the Wild West, as it is called by some people. But, say, is your camp anywhere around here?"

"It is right over there, less than a quarter of a mile from here. You see that big, dead tree, with the top broken off?"

"Yes," answered Wild, as he looked in the direction indicated.

"Well, our camp is right close to that tree. My cousin and our hired man went out to try and shoot something about two hours ago, and in some way I got lost. But by the aid of my glasses I located the spot from that spur up there, and I was just coming down to head for the camp when I sighted you folks. I thought you were my companions first; but the moment I set eyes on the young lady I realized that I had made a mistake. Are you camped near here?"

"Yes; less than five minutes' walk will bring us to our camp."

"Ah! I see. I am glad to know that we are not entirely alone in this wild place. Say, but the hunting is great in this part of the country, isn't it?"

"Yer kin bet your life it is!" answered the scout, looking around the young man in search of the game he had bagged.

"Oh, I haven't shot anything yet," and the tenderfoot smiled, as he understood what the scout meant. "My cousin and the hired man have, though. But, say, if you have no objections I will introduce myself. I am Norman Gibbs, of New Haven, Connecticut. My cousin has nicknamed me the 'Tenderfoot Tourist.'"

"Good fur him!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, grinning and nodding his approval. "Got any good chewin' tobacker?"

"Why, no; but I have some very fine cigarettes, sir. You are welcome to help yourself."

Out came a leather case containing cigarettes.

"I don't smoke sich things," the scout said, shaking his head. "A cigar is bad enough, but will do when I can't git a chaw of tobacker, or smoke my pipe. Much obliged to yer, Mr. Tenderfoot Two Wrists."

There was a smile all around at this sally.

But the tenderfoot tourist lighted a cigarette, and then, shouldering his rifle, turned to leave, saying:

"I'll tell Cousin Dane about meeting you, and perhaps we will pay your camp a visit after supper."

"Do so, by all means," answered Wild.

"Goodby until then. But, say, I would be pleased to know who you are, so I may tell Cousin Dane about you."

"My name is Young Wild West," replied our hero.

Then he introduced his sweetheart and the scout.

The tenderfoot thanked him, and then excused himself and hurried toward the dead tree.

"A curious galoot that," remarked Cheyenne Charlie, as he watched him disappear in a little grove of pines.

"He is certainly a genuine tenderfoot, all right," Arietta answered, with a smile.

"There is no mistake about that, Et," Wild observed. "But do you know that the galoot is following right along after the tracks of the grizzly? I reckon we had better follow him, for the first thing he knows he will run against bigger game than he is looking for!"

"That's right; we'd better go on after him," said the scout, nodding his approval.

The three suited the action to the words.

They did not mean to let Mr. Norman Gibbs, of New Haven, Connecticut, know that they were following him, however.

They were simply doing it for his own good, for they all knew what was likely to happen if he came upon the grizzly.

The best he could do, perhaps, was to wound the beast with a shot from his rifle, and that meant that he would stand a pretty sure chance of being torn to pieces by the sharp claws and teeth of the animal, besides having his bones crushed by the hugging the beast would give him.

Arietta was not a little amused as she thought over the young man's fluent conversation.

Occasionally our friends met tenderfeet, and some of them were of the real innocent kind, too.

But this particular one seemed to be so genuine, not-

withstanding that he was a very bright young man, that he was bound to cause a smile by his talk.

They continued on their way, noticing that the bear tracks and the footprints of the tenderfoot tourist led in exactly the same direction.

"Ther grizzly has gone to ther camp of ther galoots," observed Cheyenne Charlie. "He's smelled fresh meat, most likely, an' if there ain't no one there he's helpin' himself ter a big feed. Yer kin about bet on that, Wild."

"I reckon you've got it right, Charlie," was our hero's reply. "Well, we'll soon find out."

The young man from Connecticut was now in the woods and undergrowth, and entirely out of their sight.

But in a very few minutes they saw the dead tree with the broken top looming up almost over them, and then they knew they must be right at the camp.

It was just then that a frightened yell sounded.

Young Wild West and his two companions pushed their way through the bushes and came to a clearing.

Under a sloping bank two tents were erected.

Another yell sounded, followed by a fierce growling, and they turned their gaze in the direction it came from.

The three were just in time to see a startling, not to say, comical, sight.

The Tenderfoot Tourist was clinging to the top of a stout sapling close to the tents and a big grizzly was in the act of shaking him down.

"Help! Help!" he shouted.

Young Wild West took in the situation at a glance, and his rifle went to his shoulder.

He knew that if the young man dropped he would fall a victim to the angry bear, so, taking a quick aim, he pulled the trigger.

Crang!

As the sharp report rang out the grizzly let go the sappling and staggered back.

The bullet had reached the heart of the big beast, and down it went, struggling in the throes of death.

Flop!

Down came the frightened tenderfoot in a heap to the ground.

"Saved!" he managed to gasp, as he looked at our friends in joyous amazement.

CHAPTER II.

AT THE CAMP OF OUR FRIENDS.

"You come mighty near gittin' your face scratched an' bein' hugged a little, I reckon," said Cheyenne Charlie, as he stepped up and assisted Norman Gibbs to his feet. "I rather think that yer thought yer was a goner that time, didn't yer?"

"Oh, oh!" cried the tenderfoot. "I am so glad you came, Young Wild West. I was terribly frightened, but I had sense enough to realize that when your rifle went to your shoulder I was going to be saved. It was an awful ordeal, though. I never saw such a big bear in my life!"

"Well, the next time you are out hunting keep on the lookout for bear tracks," Wild answered, as he came for-

ward, followed by his sweetheart, whose face wore a smile. "By doing that you can have the chance of getting a shot at a bear or getting out of the way, just as you choose."

"I will remember what you say, Young Wild West. The next time I will be looking for tracks when I am out alone. I will——"

"Hey, Norman! Hello! Are you at the camp?" came from the woods on the right.

"Yes, Dan!" shouted the tenderfoot. "Come on! Everything is all right now, though I had a very close call with a big bear."

The next minute two men appeared on the scene.

Both were attired in stout, but well-worn, hunting suits, and one had a scar that reached almost across his left cheek.

This fellow was such a villainous-looking man that our three friends could not help putting him down as a suspicious character.

The other was a rather good-looking man of thirty, and of a smiling countenance.

It was easy to judge him as being the tourist's cousin.

The two newcomers were not a little surprised at seeing our three friends there, and when they looked at the dead grizzly they did not have to be told that the young man from Connecticut had not shot it.

"How are yer, strangers?" said the younger of the two, politely. "I reckon yer must have been jest in time ter save my cousin, by ther looks of things."

"Well, that is about the size of it," Wild answered. "The grizzly had him treed, and he was about to be shaken down when we arrived. I saw a chance to put a bullet in the right place, and I did it."

"Well, I'm mighty much obliged to yer," and the hunter put out his hand, which Wild shook warmly.

"Let me introduce you to Dan Gibbs, my cousin," said the tenderfoot, who had recovered from his fright rather soon. "The other man is our helper, Ripper Sam, an old guide and bear hunter."

Ripper Sam, as he was called, simply nodded his head. He did not offer to shake hands with any one.

But Dan Gibbs seemed more than pleased, and when he had been introduced to Arietta and the scout he wanted to know all about it.

When the tenderfoot had related his version of it Wild told the rest, and the hunter laughed heartily.

"It ain't no laughin' matter, I know, Norman," he said, apologetically. "But I jest can't help it, that's all. You must have made a comical sight a-hangin' ter that there saplin', an' ther grizzly tryin' ter shake yer down. Ha, ha, ha!"

He fairly roared now, but the hired man did not seem to see anything funny about it, and busied himself about the camp.

Wild, Charlie and Arietta joined in the laugh, and they watched Ripper Sam at the same time.

He looked up and saw them, and a scowl showed on his face for an instant.

"That galoot is no good," thought Young Wild West. "I reckon the tenderfoot tourist and his cousin had better look out for him."

It was very close to supper time now, so after they

had conversed a few minutes our three friends turned to go back to their own camp.

"We will drop over and see you after supper, if you don't object," said Norman Gibbs. "You'll agree to that, won't you, Dan?"

"Oh, yes," replied the hunter. "How fur are yer away from here, Mr. West?"

"Less than half a mile, and almost due north," was the reply. "We will be glad to see you, all of us."

"How many are there of yer?"

"Six, not counting the two Chinamen we have with us. The three of us you see here and Jim Dart, my other partner, and his sweetheart, Eloise Gardner, and Charlie's wife, Anna. We travel around a great deal, and our sole object is to scrape up adventure. We sometimes strike something in the way of gold, too, and that always comes in handy."

"I see. Well, me an' Norman will come over after supper. We'll leave our man in charge of ther camp."

Wild and his companions again assured them that they would be welcome and then they left the camp, turning the grizzly over to their care to do as they pleased with.

They were not long in reaching their own camp, which was located in a little glen, close beside a bubbling spring, with grass for the horses growing in abundance near at hand.

Anna, the scout's wife, a comely young woman in her twenties, was the first to greet them.

"What did you shoot?" she asked.

"Nothing but a grizzly," our hero answered.

"Nothing but a grizzly, eh? Well, I think that is a great deal."

Jim Dart, who was a boy about the same age as our hero, got up when he heard this, and his sweetheart, Eloise Gardner, followed him.

"Where's your pelt, Charlie?" he asked, looking at the scout, expectantly.

"Oh, I left it on ther bear," was the reply. "Yer see, we didn't want ter claim ther grizzly, since Wild shot it right in ther camp of some people."

Then those who had been waiting at the camp wanted to know all about it, and as Arietta started to tell of the adventure first, she was allowed to go ahead.

Her interested hearers laughed at the recital, and they declared that they would much like to see the tenderfoot tourist.

Hop Wah and Wing Wah, the Chinese brothers, who worked for our friends in the capacity of handy man and cook, were interested in the story about the grizzly, too.

"Velly muchee funny, so be," remarked Hop, who, by the way, was far more clever than he looked to be.

He was, in fact, one of the smartest of his race. He was a sleight-of-hand performer, card sharp and a sort of practical joker, though, to look at him, one would have taken him for a very simple-minded Celestial, indeed.

His brother, on the contrary, knew little but to work and mind his own business.

But he was very often led astray by Hop, and then he would do wrong, in the way of taking a little whisky, which they both invariably called "tanglefoot."

As far as the real work went, Hop was hardly needed, but as there was lots of amusement to be had out of him,

and as he had, on more than one occasion, been the means of saving the lives of different members of the party by his cleverness, he had become a sort of fixture among them, and they felt that they could hardly dispense with him.

It was the same way with the clever Chinaman. He could not have been induced to leave them and work for anybody else, no matter what the salary might be.

Wing was a very good cook, and that was as far as he went.

"Me likee see um tenderfoot tourist," said Hop, smiling at the scout, as he came over and faced him. "He velly muchee funny Melican man, so be, Misler Charlie."

"Oh, I s'pose you'd like ter git 'quainted with him, all right," was the reply. "You'd be in some gamblin' game with him right away, if he'd let yer. An' you'd win all his money an' make him bring his trip to an end, too, I reckon. That galoot would be fine game fur you, Hop; but yer kin bet that I'm goin' ter warn him, if he comes over here to-night."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie," was the bland reply. "Me no care. Me allee samee goodee Chinee; me go to um Sunday school in Flisco."

"Yes, you've told that so many times that I s'pose yer believe it yerself now. But jest shet up! We don't want ter hear nothin' about it now. How's ther supper comin' on, Wing?"

"Be allee samee leady in 'boutee ten minutes, Misler Charlie," replied the cook.

The work of getting the evening meal ready was pushed rapidly now, the girls, as Wild and his two partners always called them, though Anna was a married woman, assisting Wing.

When it was ready they sat down and ate as only hungry mortals can.

The fresh mountain air was enough to give them an appetite, if nothing else would; but being so much in the open air they were all hardy, and eating was something they enjoyed.

It was not more than half an hour after supper when they heard footsteps approaching.

As they supposed, the tenderfoot and his cousin quickly came in view.

"Here we are, Young Wild West!" the former called out. "We hurried our supper along a little, so we could get over. We left our hired man skinning the grizzly for us. If you don't want the pelt I am going to ship it East as soon as we get it cured."

"Do it, by all means," answered our hero. "We don't want it. If we felt in need of a grizzly skin we wouldn't be long in finding one, I reckon."

"That's right," spoke up the hunter. "Grizzlies is thicker around these parts this fall than they was ever knowed ter be afore. They've been makin' it hard fur ther sheep herders, you kin bet!"

"Is that so? Well, I reckon we'll have to start on a grizzly hunt, then. We'll thin them out a little, just to help the sheepmen."

"And, if you haven't any objections, we'll join in with you," said the tenderfoot. "I want to have the honor of killing one grizzly before I get through hunting in the Rockies."

"All right," Wild answered. "You are welcome to join with us. We can't put in more than two or three days at it, though. We have a little business to attend to over at a mining camp about sixty miles from here. We have a silver mine there, and we want to find out how things are going."

CHAPTER III.

RIPPER SAM HAS SOME VISITORS.

As the tenderfoot tourist said, Ripper Sam was busy skinning the grizzly when they left the camp.

But they had not been gone more than five minutes when he stopped his work and, rising to his feet, he shook his fist in the direction the two men had gone, exclaiming:

"You kin make friends with them strangers if yer want ter. But it ain't goin' ter block my game, an' yer kin bet on it! I didn't hire with yer jest fur ther little wages yer agreed ter pay; I'm lookin' fur more'n that. That tenderfoot galoot has got a pile of money with him, an' I know it. That's what I hired fur—ter git that!"

He kicked the carcass of the bear, as though it was causing him unnecessary trouble, and then going to the tent, which was in two sections, and really looked as though there were two of them, and lifting up a blanket, pulled out a bottle.

"Here goes fur a good drink, all by myself," he muttered, and, putting the bottle to his lips, he swallowed some of the contents.

He had barely put the cork back when a voice called out, softly:

"Hey, there, pard! Ain't yer goin' ter treat us?"

Ripper Sam gave a start, and, putting the bottle down, leaped to his feet.

"Who's that?" he asked, laying his hand on his revolver.

"Don't git excited, pard," came the reply, and then a man stepped from the bushes. "It's me, Jake Reed, an' I've got a good friend with me. You didn't think you was goin' ter have this game all to yourself, did you? I reckon we met ther tenderfoot a couple of times in Townsend. We seen his roll of money, an' we jest made up our minds that we'd strike out after you, an' try ter git hold of some of it. Here we are, after a long journey, Sam!"

At first Ripper Sam knew not what to say.

It was plain that he knew the two men who had now stepped up before him; but it was equally plain that he was not overjoyed at seeing them there.

But he had to make the best of it, so he put on an air of pleasure and shook hands with them.

"Glad ter see yer, pards," he said. "How was it that yer didn't show up afore, since yer made up your minds that yer was goin' ter foller us?"

"We didn't have no horses, Sam," the man called Bull answered. "We had ter wait till we got a good chance ter steal a couple. Ther chance come to-day noon, an' here we are!"

"We've been layin' around here fur ther last half hour,"

spoke up the first speaker, who was called Jake Reed. "We didn't know whether to come up an' jine in with yer or not. But when we seen ther two galoots strike out an' heard 'em say that they was goin' ter visit a camp what's near by, we thought we'd wait till they had gone. I reckon that was ther best thing ter do, 'cause now we kin have a good chance ter talk things over."

"That's right," nodded Ripper Sam. "Come ter think of it, I'm mighty glad you two has come. There's some people near by what I don't think much of. They're putty good on ther shoot, I reckon; an' if anything happened that was ter make 'em git after me I wouldn't have an easy time of it alone."

"What sort of galoots are they what's camped so close by, Sam?" Jake Reed queried.

"Well, all I seen of 'em is a man an' a boy an' a gal. But there's more of 'em at ther camp, so I heard 'em say. Ther boy is a likely lookin' young galoot, too. He's got an eye on him that sorter makes yer feel squeamish when he looks at yer good an' sharp. He killed that grizzly with one shot jest as it was shakin' ther tenderfoot down from that saplin' there. An' he was so cool about it that I reckon he's a bad customer ter tackle. He's about full-grown, mighty good-lookin' an' has long, light hair hangin' over his shoulders. He sartinly looks like one who understands his business, all right."

"Did yer hear what his name was?" queried Reed, showing great interest as he spoke.

"Why, yes. His name are Young Wild West."

"Jest what I thought! By jingo! Bull, he's ther same galoot what made it so lively fur us in Boulder County a year ago that we had ter skip. He's a regular terror, is this Young Wild West! He won't let a galoot what's any way crooked live in peace, he won't! An' he's ther champion deadshot, too, they say. Well, I guess we don't want ter buck up ag'in him much."

"He's ther same, identical chap," said Bull, shaking his head. "I always did say that if I ever got anything like a good chance I was goin' ter plug him with a bullet. It's somethin' he oughter have had long ago. He's too meddlesome fur sich ones as we are."

"I should say so, 'cordin' ter that," said Ripper Sam. "Well, if that's ther kind of a galoot he is, I reckon we'll have some trouble in gettin' ther tenderfoot's money. But there's jest this much about it, pards—I started out fur ther express purpose of gittin' it, an' I ain't goin' ter git left!"

"Sartinly not!" retorted Bull. "I reckon we kin fix Young Wild West, if he goes ter botherin' with us. I'll tell yer what we'll do, Sam. We'll lay low in ther bushes at a safe distance, an' along about midnight we'll sneak up here. Then, if yer can't git hold of ther galoot's money any other way, we'll have ter use force ter git it, that's all."

"Well," and Ripper Sam shook his head, "if force has ter be used, I reckon it would be a good idea fur me ter make out that you was strangers, an' that I was stickin' up fur them. I'll start after yer when yer leave, makin' out that I'm tryin' ter catch yer. I'll take my horse, of course, an' they'll have a mighty long wait afore they see me ag'in."

"Well, it won't make much difference ter us," replied

Reed. "So if yer want it done that way, that's ther way we'll do it."

"Well, it will sorter fool 'em fur a little while, anyhow."

"All right; let it go at that, then."

"You say yer seen his roll; how much do yer think he's got?" Sam asked.

"All of three thousand dollars, I'm sure."

"Well, that would be a thousand apiece fur us, wouldn't it?"

"Yes; more money than I've had at one time since I was in some crooked minin' business up in Boulder County," answered Reed.

"An' more'n I ever had at one time," said Sam, shaking his head. "I've been in some putty good games at robbin' folks, but I never got as much as a thousand dollars in one haul. This will be all right, this will."

Just then there came a crashing in the bushes, and as quickly as they could Jake Reed and Bull darted behind the tents.

They thought it was the tenderfoot and his cousin returning.

But when they peeped from their hiding place the next minute and saw a very innocent-looking Chinaman approaching they were relieved.

"Hello, there, you heathen!" called out Ripper Sam, looking at the Chinaman in surprise. "Where'd you come from?"

"Me come ffrom China," was the bland reply. "Me allee samee velly goodee Chineese."

It was no other than Hop Wah, Young Wild West's clever Chinaman.

Hop had taken occasion to leave the camp unobserved, after he heard that there was a hired man in charge of the hunters' camp.

He knew his game was blocked, as far as gambling with the two visitors was concerned, and it occurred to him to come over and see the man in charge of the camp.

It was quite likely that he could pick up some sort of a game with him, he thought.

"Velly nicee evening, so be," he remarked, as he took a seat near the surprised man.

"Yes, very nice, Heathen," was the reply. "But jest answer my question: Where did yer come from—jest now, I mean?"

"Me allee samee comee ffrom Young Wild West's camp, so be. Um two Melican mans comee to see my boss and him fliends, so me allee samee comee see you. You velly nicee Melican man."

"Yer think so, eh? Well, what do yer want?"

"Me wantee play lille gamee dlaw pokee to pass um timee 'way."

It was getting dark now, but not enough to prevent the rascally hired man from noticing that the Celestial took a pack of cards from his pocket.

A grin overspread the face of Ripper Sam.

Like the majority of his kind, he knew all about draw poker.

It was the greatest of all gambling games in the section of the Rocky Mountains, and why shouldn't he understand it.

But, more than that; he was very fond of it.

The two villains behind the tent could not resist the temptation to come out and join Sam and the Chinaman.

Ripper Sam did not like this much, since he knew the plans they had formed would be spoiled now.

The Chinaman would surely tell Young Wild West and his friends that he had met them there.

The hired man looked at them reproachfully.

"It's all right, Sam," said Jake Reed, nodding in a matter-of-fact way. "We'll take a hand in ther poker game."

Hop was surprised to see them, of course; but he quickly recovered himself and nodded, smilingly.

"We havee nicee, lillee four-handee game, so be," he said.

"That's it!" exclaimed Bull. "Got any money, Heathen?"

"Me allee samee gottee 'boutee twenty-fivee dollee."

"Good! That's jest about ther limit of my pile. Sam, ain't yer got a lantern, so we kin see?"

"Yes, I reckon we've got a lantern here," was the reply. "We set out putty well fixed, an' we've got almost everything what's needed fur campin' out. A pack mule carried our things here, yer know. Ther Tenderfoot Tourist has got plenty of money, an' he believes in bein' comfortable, so I heard him say."

Hop was shrewd enough to realize that he had fallen in company that was decidedly bad.

But that never bothered him, for he relied on his cleverness to get him out of any trouble that might turn up.

The lantern was soon forthcoming, and then they picked out a suitable spot to begin the game.

CHAPTER IV.

HOP TRICKS THE TRIO OF VILLAINS.

It happened that there was a flat rock there, and this just answered the purpose for the four to pursue their game of draw poker.

The lantern was hung from the limb of a tree, so that its full light might fall upon the rock, and then Hop took a seat and began shuffling the cards.

"Are yer sure there's a full deck there?" Jake Reed asked, as he reached for the pack. "I always like ter know that afore I begin a game, no matter how small ther ante is. I reckon I'll count 'em."

"Allee light," answered the Chinaman, smiling blandly. "You countee; me allee samee velly sure um cards allee lere, so be."

The villain counted them and found that Hop was correct.

Then he gave them a shuffle and the cut for deal took place.

Bull, who was on the left of Hop, won the deal.

This made it so that our Celestial friend would be the last of the four to get a deal.

But it was just the same to Hop.

He had no doubt but that as many as four hands would be played, though he was not sure of any more.

When it came his deal he was going to get in some of his fine work and rake in what money there was in the party.

That was the way Hop did business.

Ripper Sam, who sat next to the dealer, put up a half dollar.

"That'll be ther ante; an' two dollars ther limit," he said. "I reckon we kin have a nice, little game under them conditions."

Then he winked at his two friends, as much as to say, "It won't take very long to clean out ther heathen."

The cards being dealt, Hop found himself the possessor of a pair of kings, so he went in for the draw.

There was no doubt that the three rascally men meant to divide their winnings, for only Bull remained in.

"It's your bet," he said to Hop, after they had each drawn three cards.

Hop had not gained anything by the draw, but he promptly bet two dollars.

Bull called him, and he, having three jacks, won.

Two dollars and a half of the Chinaman's money had passed from his possession, anyhow, and they all thought they were making pretty good headway.

Ripper Sam dealt next, and he, knowing something about "fixing" the cards, put out a bait to Hop by giving him three aces cold.

Hop took right hold of the bait.

When the cards had been drawn and he found himself the possessor of a pair of deuces, along with his three aces, he raised the betting.

They all stayed in once around, each raising it the limit.

Hop raised it again, and then Reed and Bull dropped out.

Ripper Sam raised it another two dollars, and then Hop called him.

"I've got four little treys," the villain said, with a smile.

"Velly goodee hand, so be," answered Hop, shaking his head and acting as though he was worried about something.

The three villains laughed, and the game went on.

The next hand Hop lost about the same amount, this time on three fours.

Then it came his deal.

Hop seemed to handle the cards rather awkwardly, so the three men thought, and smiles were exchanged.

But they did not know that all the time the clever Chinaman was getting certain cards together and arranging it so he could give every one a good hand.

He found that the men were very easy to deceive, and when he laid the deck down to be cut he had everything just as he wanted it.

The man on his right cut the cards, but he did not notice that Hop got them together just as they had been before the cutting process.

The deal was made and each one of the players found himself the possessor of a single ace, but no pair.

Hop had figured it that they would each draw four

cards, but if they changed this it would make no difference, as he had made provisions for it.

They all came in and, as he expected, they each called for four cards.

The first man got four queens on the draw; the second four jacks, and the third four tens.

Then Hop discarded his four cards, holding the ace, the same as they had done.

He drew four kings.

He looked at his hand and shook his head, however.

The clever Chinaman had a way of fooling people and making them think that he was holding a hand of the doubtful kind.

The betting went around, each man raising it to the limit.

After studying his hand for a moment, Hop met the raises, and then lifted it again.

The three rascals looked at each other, but all they could learn in this was that each seemed to be confident of holding the winning hand.

They all stayed in, and it went on around several times, each one raising the betting in turn.

Pretty soon the money that Bull possessed was down to the low-water mark.

He scraped up what he had, which amounted to a dollar and eighty-five cents, and put it in.

"I reckon you'll give me a show on this, won't yer?" he asked, looking at the rest of the players.

There was an answer in the affirmative, for both Ripper Sam and Jake Reed were pretty nearly broke.

"Allee light," said Hop, as he put in the required amount. "Now, whatee you allee got, so be?"

The three were not long in showing their cards.

"You allee got velly nicee hands, so be," said the Chinaman, blandly, "but me allee samee got lillee nicer, so be; me got four lillee kings!"

His victims gasped in unison, and then they looked at each other in silence, while Hop scooped in the money.

"Me havee velly muchee luckee, lat timee," he said, smiling at them. "Me feel allee samee sure my turnee comee pletty soonee, so be."

"An' we all had four of a kind, too!" exclaimed Bull.

"Velly stlange, so be."

"Mighty funny, I reckon," ventured Ripper Sam.

"Velly muchee funny," admitted Hop.

"Looks as though there might have been somethin' crooked about it, boys."

"It sartinly does look that way," said Reed, as he picked up the cards and looked them over. "But I never seen nothin' crooked goin' on. Ther blamed heathen didn't seem ter be fixin' ther cards."

"Me no fixee!" spoke up Hop, shaking his head and looking at the speaker in innocent surprise. "Me velly muchee lucky, so be; lat allee."

"But we all held four of a kind—somethin' I never seen in my whole life afore," declared Reed, looking puzzled.

"Velly muchee stlange, so be. Me never see somethin' likee lat," said Hop, as he arose to his feet.

The fact was that the clever Chinaman was thinking that it was time he left the camp.

He knew very well that he had a set of rascals to deal

with, and that they would make an attempt to rob him was more than probable.

But Hop did not mean to be robbed.

He quickly pulled four cigars from his pocket, and, selecting one of them, put it in his mouth.

Then he tendered each of them one.

The villains accepted willingly, for cigars were a scarcity in that part of the country.

Hop produced a box of matches and the four cigars were lighted.

They all puffed away like good fellows, and Hop started in to tell a little story about his wonderful uncle in China.

Reed shot a peculiar glance at Ripper Sam and then stepped toward the tent.

The rascally hired man followed him.

Hop did not appear to pay the least bit of attention to this, but he was taking it in, just the same.

"We'll foller ther heathen an' clean him out, Sam," said Reed, in a whisper. "We'll fix it so you won't git ther blame of it. When your bosses come back jest tell 'em that a couple of men yer knew dropped in ter camp ter see yer. Ther Chinaman will let Young Wild West an' ther rest know all about it, anyhow, so you might as well break ther news ter ther tenderfoot an' ther other galoot."

"All right," Sam answered. "But, remember, I'm ter have a quarter of what yer git from ther Chinaman."

"Sartin yer are. An' we're ter have a quarter each of what we git from ther tenderfoot."

"Oh, yes. That's been settled on already."

"Well, then——"

Bang!

The cigar Bull was smoking exploded just then, with a noise as loud as a shotgun.

Bang!

The one Reed held in his hand followed suit.

Bang!

Ripper Sam's exploded with a louder noise than the others, it seemed.

The three villains stood looking at each other in consternation.

When they finally realized that a trick had been played upon them the Chinaman had disappeared.

"Well, by thunder!" exclaimed Sam. "Ther heathen has fooled us, after all. He give us loaded cigars, an' now he's got away, after cleaning us out of all our money! Who would have thought sich a thing of ther innercent-lookin' galoot!"

CHAPTER V.

NORMAN AND DAN DECIDE TO CAMP WITH OUR FRIENDS.

Young Wild West and his friends found the Tenderfoot Tourist and his cousin to be very nice people, indeed.

The hunter was of the old-fashioned type of Westerners, he having been brought up to the ways of his father and grandfather.

Norman Gibbs was not a first cousin of his, but a distant relative.

But Dan Gibbs had been glad to grant his request to take him hunting in the Rockies when he came out that way.

After they had talked a while on the subject of grizzly hunting Wild looked at the hunter and said:

"I must tell you, Dan Gibbs, that I do not like the looks of the fellow you have got working for you. I am a pretty good one to study a person's character by reading his face and noting his actions. That galoot is no good. How long have you known him?"

"Only since ther day afore yisterday, Wild," was the reply.

Our hero had requested them to address him by his nickname, as all his friends did, and the hunter knew and understood.

"Only since the day before yesterday, eh? Well, I reckon you made a mistake in hiring that fellow. I'll bet that he is planning to rob you at this very minute."

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised," was Dan's reply. "I was told that he was a mighty good man ter go out with, an' Norman was bound ter have what he called a servant. But I've seen jest about enough of him ter make me think ther same as you. I s'pose he thinks that Norman has got some money with him, an' he might be bad enough ter steal it, if he got ther chance."

"Yer kin bet your life he'll do that!" spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "I wouldn't trust that galoot in ther dark. Yer want ter keep a good watch on him, an' at ther first sign of anything crooked from him pull a gun on him an' make him light out. If he shows fight, plug him with a bullet. It'll do him good!"

"I reckon that's good advice, Cheyenne," nodded the hunter. "What do you think about it, Norman?"

"I don't know what to think," replied the tenderfoot, shaking his head.

"Well, don't try ter think, then," the scout said, quickly. "If yer do yer might hurt your head."

There was a laugh at this, in which Norman joined.

One thing about him was that he could take a joke much better than the average person, even, and he already regarded Cheyenne Charlie as a unique character, as comical as he was brave and trusty.

The two visitors talked away, and finally got to asking about the help Wild and his friends had.

Then, for the first time, it was noticed that Hop was not there.

Wing never told when his brother sneaked off, unless he was asked about it.

He now explained that Hop had been gone some little time and that he had an idea that he had gone to the camp of the two gentlemen who had come to visit them.

"If he's gone there yer kin bet that he'll tell yer what sort of a galoot Ripper Sam is," said the scout, shaking his head. "Jest wait till he comes back, an' you'll hear somethin', most likely."

It was not so very long before Hop did come back.

He had been running, too, as they could tell by his heavy breathing when he arrived.

"What in thunder is ther matter with yer, yer heathen galoot?" demanded the scout, as he stepped up and took the Chinaman by the collar.

"Me havee leavee velly muchee quicke, so be," was

the reply. "Um bad Melican mans play lillee pokee with me, and me allee samee winnee."

"What's that you say, Hop?" asked Wild. "You were at the camp these gentlemen belong at, wasn't you?"

"Yes, me go to see Misler Lipper Sam, and he allee samee havee two fiends lere, so be. We play lillee pokee and me allee samee winnee."

"Ripper Sam had friends there?" echoed Dan Gibbs, looking amazed.

"Lat light," Hop assured him; "ley namee allee samee Jakee and Bullee."

"Jakie and Bully? I ain't never heard of 'em, I know that," said Dan, shaking his head.

"He means to say Jake and Bull, I guess," spoke up Jim Dart, who understood the Celestial's lingo better."

"Lat whatee me say, Misler Jim. Me say um bad Melican mans' namee Jakee and Bullee."

"All right. Go ahead and tell what happened."

Hop did this in his own peculiar way, and, as uneasy as they were at finding out that their hired man had visitors while they were away, the hunter and the tourist laughed heartily when it came to the part where the cigars exploded.

"Awfully funny, I must say!" exclaimed Norman. "How is it that you are such a funny Chinaman, Hop?"

"Me allee samee born lat way," was the quick reply. "Me gottee uncle in China whatee velly smartee Chinees; me allee samee likee my uncle, so be."

"I reckon you're right," spoke up the hunter. "You was too smart fur them galoots, anyhow, an' I'm mighty glad of that. But how did yer come ter have the cigars with powder in 'em?"

"Me allee samee cally plenty allee timee, so be. You wantee tly one?"

The Chinaman asked the question so innocently and held out the cigar with such an easy grace that Dan was amazed.

"Me want ter try one of them things! I reckon not!" he answered, as soon as he could find the use of his tongue.

"Allee light; maybe um tenderfoot likee tly one, so be?"

"No," was the quick retort. "I much prefer a cigarette, thank you."

"Allee light; me givee you um cigalette."

Sure enough, he had one, and he quickly drew it from one of his pockets.

It was an innocent-looking cigarette, too; one of the sort the better class of Mexicans usually smoke.

Norman accepted it, probably not thinking that there was anything wrong about it.

He lighted it right away, and the rest of those in camp watched, expectantly.

The fact that they had been talking about the loaded cigars, and after refusing one of them, the tenderfoot had accepted the cigarette from the Chinaman, made it appear as though the cigarette might be loaded, too.

If it was, it was his own fault, for he should have known better than to take it.

All hands seemed to think this way, for no one said a word.

The tenderfoot had not taken more than half a dozen

puffs at the cigarette when there was a sharp hiss, followed by a flash, and then he was completely hidden from view in a cloud of smoke.

"Thunder!" cried Dan, excitedly. "What's happened ter him? Where are yer, Norman?"

"I—I'm here!" came the reply, in a faltering tone of voice. "What is it, anyhow?"

"It's ther blamed cigaroot, you fool!" snorted his cousin, as he noticed that every one else was laughing. "What did yer take ther thing fur, when yer oughter knowed it was loaded?"

"He—he didn't say the cigarette was loaded, did he?" queried the tourist, as the smoke blew away and left him in view once more.

"No; that's right. He didn't say it was loaded. But yer found out that it was, didn't yer?"

"Well, there was nothing so dangerous about it," and Norman smiled, rather weakly. "But, my! What a smoke it made!"

"Me velly solly me play lillee tlick on you, Misler Tendifoot Toulis," spoke up Hop, acting as though he was very sorry, indeed. "Me no helpee, so be."

"Well, don't think that I am angry about it," was the retort. "I am not the one to get angry over a little joke like that. If I had been knocked over by a heavy explosion it would have been the same, for it was my own fault."

"You're sartinly a good-natured galoot," Cheyenne Charlie declared.

"Thank you, Charlie; I am pleased to hear you say that. I always try to be good natured."

The party soon drifted back to seriousness again, and then our hero told the two visitors what he thought about the situation.

"I reckon Ripper Sam, as you call him, has known right along that his two friends were coming along," he said. "Now, the best thing you can do is to break up camp and come here with us. This is a much better camping spot than where you are located, anyhow. Don't let your man know what you are doing it for, and let him come, too, unless he should make up his mind to quit. When you get back there you will find him alone, but the other two galoots will be hiding somewhere close by. No doubt he will tell you he had visitors, for he will know that Hop has told you about them. But he will probably say that they have returned to their camp somewhere. It might be, however, that they will be there when you get back, and that they will open up their game right away. I reckon Charlie and me will go back with you."

"Come on! Let's go right away, then," spoke up Dan. "You've hit it jest right, Wild. Your advice is all right. We'll accept your invitation, and we won't be long in getting our traps over here."

"That's right, Dan. You are of the same opinion as myself," said Norman, nodding his approval. "We will only be too glad to cast our lot with you and your friends, Wild. Then, when the trouble with our hired man and his friends is over, we will do some grizzly hunting that will make my friends at home open their eyes when I tell them about it."

It was soon arranged, and then Wild and Charlie set out for the camp with the two.

Hop asked if he might accompany them as they were leaving, and our hero answered in the affirmative.

CHAPTER VI.

RIPPER SAM GETS THE TENDERFOOT'S POCKETBOOK.

The camp that the Chinaman had left in such a hurried manner was soon reached.

As our friends supposed, when they got there no one but Ripper Sam was to be seen.

He was busy cleaning up his rifle, and when he saw that the two he had hired with were accompanied by Young Wild West and his partner he showed just the least signs of being uneasy.

He did not see Hop right away, for the clever Chinaman chose to keep in the rear just then.

"Sam," said Dan Gibbs, "I reckon we'll move our camp right away."

"What!" cried the astonished villain. "Move to-night, Dan?"

"Yes; we've decided to go over with Young Wild West an' his friends. It's a much better place there, since ther grazin' is a hundred per cent. better than it is here, an' ther spring water they've got there jest beats anything you ever seen. Jest git a move on yer an' take down ther tent. It won't take long ter move."

The villainous hired man sat looking at Dan in clear astonishment while he was speaking, and he seemed unable to get up.

But by a great effort he regained his composure, and then he arose to his feet.

"I think you're makin' a mistake in leavin' here to-night," he said, shaking his head. "It only makes extra work, an' I don't believe in mixin' up with others when you're out huntin', anyhow."

"Well, it don't make any difference what you believe in, Ripper Sam," spoke up the tenderfoot. "My money is paying you, I think, and you agreed to do as we wanted you when you hired with us."

"Yes, but I don't have ter do what I don't want ter do," was the dogged reply.

"Don't you want to move over to the camp of Young Wild West?"

"No!"

"Well, all right, then. You don't have to do it. You can quit as soon as you like and join your two friends."

Ripper Sam gave a start.

He thought that the Chinaman might not have told of his visit to the camp, since nothing had been said on the arrival of his two bosses.

But now he knew.

It was just then that Hop came strolling in, puffing away on a cigar as calmly as a summer morning.

"Hello, Misler Lipper Sam!" he said, with a bland smile. "You lookee velly muchee wollied. Wantee play lillie more dlaw pokee, so be?"

The rascally fellow muttered something that was unintelligible, and then he proceeded with the work of taking down the tents.

"So you don't want to join your two friends you had call upon you this evening, then, Sam?" Norman Gibbs remarked.

"No; I don't want nothin' to do with them fellers," was the quick retort. "They ain't no friends of mine; I know 'em, that's all. I don't know an awful lot of good of 'em, either. But I had ter treat 'em all right when they come here."

"Oh, I see. Well, I rather think you are satisfied with what we agreed to pay you, are you not?"

"Oh, yes, Mister Gibbs."

"Very well; we will let it stand the way it is for the present, then. Now hurry a little, because we want to get settled in our new quarters as soon as possible."

The tourist talked in such a business-like way that Wild and the scout were not a little surprised at him.

But they thought it well to say nothing just then, so they got in and helped to do the things necessary to moving.

The pack mule the hunters had was soon loaded, and with the three belonging to the outfit carrying a few minor things, they set out.

Wild and Charlie were keeping a sharp watch, for they thought it possible that the two friends of the hired man might take a notion to attack them.

But nothing of the kind occurred, and in a little while they were at the camp.

Jim and the girls were waiting for them expectantly, but Wing, the cook, was leaning against the foot of a big tree, sound asleep.

Hop no sooner saw him than he resolved to rouse him, since the noise of the approach had failed to do so.

He drew a good-sized firecracker, which he had made with his own hands, from one of his capacious pockets, and, lighting it from the end of his cigar, tossed it over close to his sleeping brother's feet.

Bang!

As the cracker exploded Wing leaped to his feet and let out a yell of fear.

"Whattie mattee?" he cried, as he looked around, in a state of intense alarm.

"You allee samee dleam velly bad dleam, my blother," Hop answered, shaking his head, sadly. "You havee stopee eatee too much; you allee samee gittee nightee-mare, so be."

But the smiling faces of the others soon convinced the Celestial that it was no dream.

Then, too, the smoking remains of the bursted cracker were scattered about him.

"My blother allee samee velly muchee flesh," he declared. "Me no likee."

"Um fireclacker makee more noisee lan um cigar, so be, Misler Lipper Sam," said Hop, turning to the hired villain and smiling blandly.

"I reckon it did," was the reply, though he did not smile.

"Makee you velly muchee surprlise, so be."

Ripper made no reply to this.

"Makee your two fliends velly muchee surprlise, too, when um cigars allee samee go bang! Me velly muchee smartee Chinee; me no lettee um fliends takee my money, so be. Ley gittee leady to take, allee samee."

"Well, if they was gittin' ready fur anything like that I didn't know nothin' about it," declared the rascal, looking toward his employers, as though he said it for their express benefit.

Then he got at work putting up the tent on the spot selected.

It was within twenty feet of the two tents our friends occupied as their sleeping quarters.

The horses and pack mule were tied with lariats near the others, and there was no danger of their going hungry during the night.

By the time everything was in shape the hour was a little late, and they all thought about retiring.

Wild held a consultation with his two partners, unobserved by Ripper Sam.

They decided to make out that they were all going to turn in and go to sleep, as they had no fear of being bothered by man or beast during the night.

But at the same time they were going to keep a sharp watch on Ripper Sam, and be on the lookout for the approach of his two colleagues.

"Well, I reckon everything is all right now," said Wild, a few minutes later. "It is hardly likely that a grizzly will come along and interfere with our horses. There might be one to come around and try to get at the meat we have got hung up yonder, but if such a thing happens some one will most likely hear the noise and wake up. We will all turn in and get a good sleep and then the first thing in the morning we will strike out on our grizzly hunt. Norman, I hope you will sleep good and sound. You need not have anything on your mind, for it is hardly probable that any one would attempt to bother our camp."

The Tenderfoot Tourist seemed a bit surprised at hearing the young deadshot talk this way.

"You are not going to keep a watch, then, eh, Wild?" he asked.

Our hero shook his head in the negative.

"It isn't necessary," he answered.

But he gave a wink, and Norman was quick to understand what he was getting at.

Ripper Sam, however, did not see the wink.

He heard what the boy said, and he took it for granted that he meant every word of it.

Fifteen minutes later the camp was in silence.

The snoring of Wing, who was the first to drop off into Slumberland, could be heard, and now and then the sharp cry of some nightbird or the snappy bark of a coyote, punctuated the rasping sound.

Ripper Sam did not go to sleep, however.

He feined it almost from the start, and when he finally became satisfied that the two men he worked for were asleep he got himself in readiness to rob the tenderfoot of his money and then sneak off.

That his two friends were even now close at hand, he had no doubt, as they must certainly have been watching what took place.

One section of the tent they used was for the storing of their supplies, and the three slept in the other part.

Ripper Sam was pretty sure that the tenderfoot slept with his money under his head, for he had watched him

the night before, and had seen him place something under the blanket as he lay down.

The young man must have placed a great deal of dependence in our hero, for he allowed himself to fall asleep, and when the would-be robber crept stealthily around his head and began feeling under the blanket he never so much as stirred.

Sure enough, there was a pocketbook there, and slowly the villain pulled it out.

Satisfied that he had obtained the bulk of the sleeping man's money, he made haste to leave the tent.

Once outside he looked at the tents of our friends and, seeing nothing wrong, started for his horse.

He had just reached it and was in the act of putting the saddle on, when Jake Reed and Bull appeared on the scene.

"Did yer git it, Sam?" asked the former, in a whisper.

"Yes," was the reply; "I got it all right."

"Well, hand it over to me, then!" exclaimed a voice right close to them.

The three villains started as though they had been shot.

Before them stood Young Wild West, a revolver in his hand.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VILLAINS "LIGHT OUT."

Both Young Wild West and Jim Dart had been watching for Ripper Sam to come out of the tent, for they expected that he would rob the Tenderfoot Tourist and then try to sneak away.

When he did come out and start for his horse our hero was after him like a shot, though he made not the least particle of noise in going.

Jim followed him a little more slowly.

Wild was not surprised when he saw the other two villains appear.

He had been confident all along that they were somewhere close by the camp.

When he showed himself he certainly was before three astonished, not to say, frightened, villains.

"You are pretty good as a sneak thief, Ripper Sam," he said, calmly, as he moved the muzzle of his revolver so that it covered the men alternately. "But you are a little off when it comes to getting away with the boodle. You heard what I said, didn't you?"

Just then Jim appeared.

Realizing that it was all up, Ripper Sam handed the pocketbook to our hero.

"Take it!" he said. "I needed money, an' I couldn't help it. Ther temptation was there, an' I jest had ter take ther money, that's all!"

"Oh, that is how it was, eh? Well, you take my advice and don't get tempted again. The next time you try a trick like that the chances are that you'll get a bullet. I am pretty sure you will if you try it around this camp again. We are always on the lookout for sneak thieves. Jim, just march the galoots over to the tents. I want all hands to have a look at them before they leave."

"Come on!" said Jim, sternly, as he waved his revolver before the faces of the rascally trio. "Don't try to run away; if you do a bullet will find you in a hurry. We make sure when we fire at thieves."

"We ain't goin' ter run away," answered Jake Reed. "We know better than that. You caught us, an' that's all there is ter it. We've got ter do jest as you say, an' we know it."

They were marched in single file to the tents, their hands being held above their heads.

They were certainly what Cheyenne Charlie called a "sick-lookin' lot, an' no mistake!"

"Hello!" called out Wild. "Everybody come and have a look at the sneak thieves we have got here!"

"It was not long before every inmate of the camp, save Wing, were out and looking at the culprits.

"A fine lot, are they not?" our hero went on to say. "Norman, did you lose anything?"

"I—I don't know," was the reply. "I'll see."

He hurried back into the tent and came out again almost immediately.

"My wallet is gone!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

"Well, here it is. Your hired man took it while you slept, and I made him hand it over, just as he was mounting his horse to ride away with his friends. He made up his mind that he needed the money more than you did, I guess."

"By jove! So you robbed me while I was asleep, eh, Sam?" said the tourist, looking at the villain.

"There ain't no use in sayin' I didn't," was the reply. "I was caught with ther pocketbook, so what's ther use of tryin' ter say I didn't take it? You didn't give it ter me, did yer?"

"No; but let me tell you something, Ripper Sam. There was only about six dollars in that wallet when you took it! I hid the rest of my money in another place. If you had got away with it you would have been a very disappointed scoundrel when you opened it. I may be a tenderfoot, but I'm not altogether a fool!"

All hands were a little surprised to hear this.

But they gave the young man credit for the way he had done it.

"I'm mighty sorry I stole ther pocketbook, if there wasn't any more money than that in it," said Ripper Sam, shaking his head. "Six dollars ain't enough ter run no sich risk fur. I reckoned that there was a big pile in ther pocketbook—enough ter give me an' my pards a little start."

The villain spoke coolly, and as though he did not fear any punishment for what he had done.

Norman opened the pocketbook and showed the contents.

There were just six one-dollar bills and some paper.

The villains said nothing, but shrugged their shoulders and looked at each other.

Wild turned to Jake Reed and said:

"It strikes me that I have seen your face somewhere. Did you ever see me before?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I seen you up in Boulder onct."

"Oh! Then you knew who was here when you came to help Ripper Sam to get away with the money, eh?"

"Yes; I knowed you an' your pards was here, Young Wild West."

"And you knew that we didn't like such galoots as you are, too?"

"Yes, we knowed all about that."

"And still you came here?"

"Well, it was worth tryin' fur, I reckon."

"Maybe it was, from your way of thinking. I think you made a big mistake, however."

"Well, every one is liable ter make mistakes."

"Yes, that's true. But I try not to make them, for my part. I may be making a mistake in letting you galoots go; but I am going to run the chances. I don't believe in lynching, or I would have you strung up right now. And I don't want to bother with you as prisoners, so I am going to let you go. You go and get your horses and lead them up here. I want you all to light out at one time, and if you don't get away in a hurry you will be apt to lose a lock or two of hair, and perhaps a piece of an ear! Hurry and fetch the horses here! I reckon the Gibbs folks don't want Ripper Sam in their employ any longer."

Reed hastened to obey the command, while Dan Gibbs went to the tent and got the few things that belonged to Ripper Sam.

They were mighty few, too, since he had gathered together as much as he could get hold of without awakening the two sleepers.

He took them, and even thanked the hunter for his kindness.

He was a pretty cool sort of a scoundrel, after all.

The horses were led to the spot by Reed, who seemed to be perfectly satisfied with the way things were turning out, and who even smiled as he came to a halt before our hero and his friends.

"Mount!" said Wild, making a motion with his revolver that showed that he meant business.

Bull was the first man to get into the saddle.

It was evident that he feared that something was going to happen that would not be exactly pleasant, for, in his way of thinking, they were getting off altogether too easy.

When all three had mounted Wild turned to Hop and said:

"Any bullets in your revolver, Hop?"

"No, Misler Wild," was the quick reply; "nothing lat will hurt um bad Melican mans."

"All right. When I tell them to light out you just blaze away at them as long as you can see them."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," and the Chinaman produced his big, old-fashioned six-shooter in a hurry.

"Now, light out, you sneaking coyotes!" cried the boy, in a ringing voice. "Make yourselves scarce!"

Away went the trio, their horses on the jump.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Hop fired three times, just as fast as he could, and at each report a streak of colored fire went after the villains.

Red, green and blue were the colors, and it is safe to say that the first shot must have scorched one of them, for the flame went right to the back of his neck.

With cries of alarm, they disappeared in the darkness,

and, laughing heartily at the way they had been made to vacate, the Tenderfoot Tourist looked at Hop and observed:

"You are a great fellow! I must get better acquainted with you."

"Don't try ter git too much acquainted with ther heathen," advised Cheyenne Charlie. "Yer heard how he cleaned them three galoots out of their money, playin' poker with 'em? If he gits you in a game he'll do ther same ter you."

"Yes, I know. Wild has already told me not to gamble with him. I won't do that, you can bet!"

"Me allee samee velly goodee Chinee," declared Hop, looking at the scout in an injured way. "Misler Charlie tly to makee me lookee allee samee velly muchee bad, so be."

The tenderfoot laughed heartily at this.

"Well, you may be a little bad; but I am sure that there is a whole lot of good in you, or you wouldn't belong to Young Wild West's party."

"Lat light, Misler Tendelfoot Toulis," answered the Chinaman, smiling and bowing.

The hoofbeats of the villains' horses soon died away in the distance, and, feeling confident that they would not be bothered by them again that night, Wild advised all hands to return to their tents.

"But we are going to keep a watch, the same as we always do," he added.

"Then I'll do my trick along with the rest," spoke up the hunter.

A few minutes later the camp was in silence again.

It was about one o'clock when Dan Gibbs was called by Jim Dart, and he went on guard with Cheyenne Charlie.

But the night passed quietly enough, and the next morning they got ready to start in on the grizzly hunt.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GRIZZLY HUNT BEGINS.

The breakfast that morning was one that pleased the Tenderfoot Tourist immensely.

It so happened that our friends had on hand a supply of the necessary articles of food that greatly exceeded in variety those that the hunter had selected.

Wing, the cook, did his best, too, and, with the fresh game they had to pick from, it was no trouble to get up a repast that was fit for any hungry mortal.

"This is what I call real living," declared Norman Gibbs, as he accepted the second piece of broiled venison from the cook. "No matter what I may get to eat during my tour of the West, I will always keep in mind this breakfast in the Rocky Mountains."

"Well, it is hardly anything new to us," said Wild, smiling at him. "Sometimes we are satisfied with just one or two things, and at other times we like a variety. Wing has cooked up a variety this morning, just to show you what he can do, I reckon. But if Anna takes a notion she can outdo him a little on corn muffins."

"I am sure these could not be beat much," spoke up

the scout's wife, blushing at the compliment bestowed upon her. "Wing does very well."

"After you showed him how," added Charlie, with a grin.

"Well, perhaps we can all be showed things that we don't know."

"Lat allee samee light," said the cook, nodding. "Me makee velly goodee doggee-pie; Melican woman no know how makee, so be."

"I reckon no American woman wants ter know, either, you almond-eyed, pigtailed, yaller-skinned galoot!" retorted Charlie. "Dogs is good enough fur Chinese an' Injuns ter eat, but white people draws ther line on 'em. I s'pose you kin make rat pie, too?"

"Me makee nicee lat flicassee, with um doggie livee saucee," was the reply.

Then the cook dodged the kick the scout directed at him and went to the coffee pot, grinning broadly.

The breakfast over, our friends got ready to do a little hunting for the grizzlies that were supposed to be so abundant in that region.

Thus far, only one had been seen by them, and that one had treed the Tenderfoot Tourist in great shape.

But the victim was more than anxious to have it said that he killed a grizzly, and our hero and his partners were just the ones to try and satisfy his ambition.

"How are you on ther shoot, anyhow?" Charlie asked him, as he saw Norman fixing up his new rifle.

"Well, not so very good with a rifle," was the reply. "I have done some pretty good shooting with a double-barrel shotgun, though."

"Shotguns ain't no good, when there's bears ter be hunted, more especially grizzlies. Say, do yer see that bird settin' on that crag over there?"

Charlie pointed to a vulture that was a good quarter of a mile away, and the bird seemed to be so small that it look like an impossibility to the tourist to hit it with a rifle.

"Yes, I see it, Charlie," he answered.

"Well, let me see yer fetch him down."

Norman shook his head.

"I couldn't do that in a week," he declared.

"Yes, yer could. Try it."

"Well, I'll try; but I know it will be of no use. I don't claim to be a good shot, nor anything like one."

He placed the butt of his rifle to his shoulder, and, after taking a careful aim, pressed the trigger.

The bird never moved.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the scout. "I reckon he didn't know yer was shootin' at him. If he had he would have got up an' dusted. Now, let me show yer how ter bring him down."

Charlie's rifle went to his shoulder.

As the report rang out the vulture went fluttering down toward the rocks below.

"That was a great shot!" exclaimed the tenderfoot. "Any one who can shoot like that can fetch down a man as far as his rifle is capable of reaching."

"I reckon that's right, Norman," Young Wild West spoke up. "But it is just as easy to hit a mark at a long distance as it is a short distance, providing you understand the rifle you are shooting with. The first thing a

fellow should do is to learn to understand his rifle. Then he must take his time, and never press the trigger until he is absolutely certain that the object he wants to hit is covered. Of course, he wants to be ready to pull the instant he gets it right. But a quick jerk of a pull is not the way; he must have the trigger pressed pretty hard when he gets the sight, so the least touch will do the rest. A man will never make a successful marksman if he fires by guess. He may make a good shot once in a while, but it is more luck than anything else."

"That is another thing I am going to remember, Wild. The first is to always look out for bear tracks, and now it is for me to make sure that I have got my target covered before I fire. I am going to do that, or else not fire at all."

"Yer didn't fire when ther grizzly chased yer up ther saplin', did yer?" asked the scout, a broad grin on his face.

"No," was the reply; "I never thought about shooting. I just made for the little tree, dropping my gun as I did so. I was frightened, and I don't hesitate to admit it. The next time it may be different."

As Anna and Eloise did not care to take part in the grizzly hunt, it was necessary that some one should remain in camp with them.

Jim Dart volunteered, declaring that he would take a little turn at it in the afternoon.

Arietta was always anxious to go, for she had learned to like danger so well that she could hardly keep away from it.

But she knew that no grizzly could get the best of her, not if she saw him first, and had time to act.

The girl was too cool for that.

A shot from her rifle was just as deadly as one from her dashing young lover's.

The party was not long in getting ready to start.

Cheyenne Charlie and Dan Gibbs were assigned the leaders, and they were much pleased over it.

Both knew pretty well where to go to find grizzlies, and as Dan was sure there were lots of them around, it looked as though they were going to have all the sport they wanted in that line.

Hop went along with one of the pack horses, so he could carry the pelts and the other game they shot back to the camp.

The rest went on foot, of course, for hunting grizzlies is seldom done on horseback.

A five or ten mile walk was not much for even Arietta, since her outdoor life had trained her to what might have been deemed hardships by some.

They struck out up a long descent, at the top of which the trees and undergrowth were so thick that to look ahead it seemed almost impossible to penetrate them.

But Charlie knew that they could get through, and he was bent on striking luck as soon as possible.

Hunting was one thing and getting the game they were after another.

Fully two miles were covered before they came upon any grizzly tracks.

They had reached a point about a mile back of the spot the tenderfoot and his cousin had been camped upon, and when Charlie struck fresh bear tracks he declared

that they were undoubtedly made by the mate of the grizzly Wild had shot the evening before.

"What do you suppose the grizzly was doing so close to the camp, anyway?" Norman asked, as he looked at the tracks with a critical eye.

"He smelled ther fresh meat yer had there," replied the scout. "Grizzlies like fresh meat, yer know."

"Oh, I see."

"Well, yer see them tracks, don't yer?"

"Yes."

"Well, keep your eyes open, then. If yer should happen ter see ther bear what made 'em, jest put your rifle to your shoulder an' draw a bead on him. If yer can't git ther spot jist behind his left foreshoulder covered strike a bead on one of his eyes an' let go at him. If yer don't drop him ther first shot give it ter him ag'in. An' then, if yer miss, keep on pumpin' lead at him. Yer kin bet that some one will be around ter take a hand in ther game, if yer can't manage it alone."

"I'll do just as you say, Charlie."

The party now spread out at a distance of perhaps thirty feet apart, Arietta keeping next to Wild.

It so happened that Norman Gibbs got to the extreme left of the line.

He pushed on through the bushes, and, as luck would have it, he suddenly came upon a big female grizzly, with two half-grown cubs near her.

The tenderfoot was partly prepared for the sight, and as he had really been wishing for a chance to distinguish himself, he did not become frightened.

The grizzly uttered a fierce growl as he stepped before her, it being heard by Cheyenne Charlie, who was next on his right.

"Give it ter him!" called out the scout, though he could not see the bear.

Crang!

The Tenderfoot Tourist fired and landed a bullet in the animal's right side.

That was enough to put the grizzly on the aggressive, and, raising upon her hind legs, she came for him, growling fiercely.

Crang!

This time Norman took better aim and the beast staggered and rolled over.

"Hurrah!" he shouted, waving his hat. "I've shot a real grizzly! Hurrah!"

The next minute Cheyenne Charlie appeared on the scene.

"Blamed if yer ain't shot one!" he exclaimed. "Hooray fur ther Tenderfoot Tourist!"

CHAPTER IX.

"BOW LEG JOHNNY" JOINS THE VILLAINS.

Ripper Sam and his two friends were not a little frightened when the clever Chinaman banged away at them with his big revolver.

Bull had the back of his neck singed, too, and that caused him to urge his horse all the faster.

They kept on riding until they were sure they were at a safe distance, and then they slowed down.

Jake Reed was the first to make a comment on what had happened.

"Well, I sorter reckon that yer know what kind of a galoot Young Wild West is now," he remarked, as he cast a furtive glance behind him. "He was watchin' every move yer made, Sam. It's quite likely that he knowed jest what you was up ter."

"How could he have knowed it?" Sam asked, gruffly.

"Well, he could imagine it, I s'pose. He's one of ther kind of galoots what knows a good deal more than he oughter, yer know. He sartinly did nail us, didn't he?"

"An' jest when we thought we had things dead ter rights," added Bull, shaking his head. "Boys, we're a blamed sight worse off now than we was afore we started out ter git ther tenderfoot's money. That heathen Chinnee beat us out of about all we had in ther poker game, an' then Sam has ter lose his job, after gittin' caught stealin' a pocketbook with only six dollars in it. This is what I calls tough, no matter how yer try ter put it!"

"Yes, it's tough. But we sorter got off putty easy, though, didn't we?" Bull observed.

"Oh, I knowed nothin' much wouldn't be done ter us," Reed declared. "Young Wild West deals square with a feller, all right. But, jest ther same, he ain't done with me—not yet!"

"I'd sorter like ter git square with ther young galoot myself," said Sam.

"Well, jest leave it ter me ter think of a way ter fix it. That money ther tenderfoot has got, as well as what ther rest of 'em has got, is goin' ter be ours. You see if it ain't, boys! We'll find a way ter clean out ther whole bunch of 'em; an' if Young Wild West only gives me a good chance I'll put an end ter his career in a jiffy."

"A mighty good job it will be, too," Bull hastened to aver.

"But we want ter be sure what we're doin' afore we try anything like that," Ripper Sam remarked, with a shake of his head.

The three rode on until they came to the spot where Reed and Bull had camped temporarily that evening.

Then they halted and dismounted.

"I reckon this will do till mornin'," said Reed, nodding his head. "Me an' Bull knows what's here, 'cause we was lookin' ther ground over afore dark. There's water right here, an' a cave ter git in, if it comes on ter storm."

"Where's ther cave?" asked Sam, trying to peer through the darkness.

"Right over here. Come on; I'll show yer."

Reed led his horse close to a cliff, and the next minute he halted and struck a match.

"Thunder!" he ejaculated, starting back and letting the match drop to the ground. "There's some one here, boys!"

What he said was true, for all three of them had seen the form of a man crouching in the cave, near its mouth.

"Ugh!" exclaimed a guttural voice. "What matter with palefaces?"

"It's an Injun!" gasped Bull.

"Me good Injun," came from the cave.

"All right. Them's ther kind we want ter see," an-

swered Reed. "How long have you been here, Redskin?" He struck another match as he spoke, and the Indian stalked out and stood before them.

He was a dirty-looking Comanche, attired in a ragged soldier uniform, a battered high hat on his head.

"Me Bow Leg Johnny," he declared, as he threw out his chest. "Me good Injun."

"All right, Bow Leg Johnny," said Reed. "Is anybody with yer?"

"No; me come alone. Me got pony, that's all."

"Well, I reckon you don't care if we stop here with yer to-night, do yer?"

"Me like."

"Good! That's ther way I like ter hear a galoot talk. S'pose we light up a little fire ter keep ther animals away? Bull, you're a might good hand at makin' a fire. Let yourself go!"

"All right," was Bull's answer, and he was soon breaking up some dry branches preparatory to lighting them.

In a very few minutes a fire was kindled near the mouth of the cave, and then it was that the pony belonging to the Indian could be seen tied to a nearby tree.

Bow Leg Johnny took a good look at his three guests, and he nodded his head, approvingly.

It was evident that he liked the looks of them pretty well.

Perhaps he was shrewd enough to guess that they were like himself—villains.

About the only things they had with them in the way of a camping outfit consisted of some blankets and a frying pan and coffee kettle.

When they had started they figured on taking what they lacked from the tenderfoot and his cousin at the same time they got the money.

The Indian was worse off than they were in this line, for he barely had one ragged blanket.

"What are yer doin' here alone, Bow Leg?" asked Jake Reed, as he took a seat in the light cast out by the fire and looked at the Comanche steadily.

"What you do here?"

"We're here fur ther purpose of makin' money."

"Injun here to make money, too."

"Ah! You're lookin' fur some one what's got ther money, I reckon?"

"You look for somebody got money?" came the reply.

"Yes; I don't mind tellin' yer that much. You're crooked, an' so are we. I wouldn't have ter look twice at yer ter know that you was a rascal. You said yer was a good Injun; but that don't amount ter anything. You're about ther same kind of a good Injun as we are good white men. Do yer own up ter it, Bow Leg?"

The Comanche grinned.

"You heap much smart," he said. "You tell me who you look for to find money, and me tell you who me look for to find money?"

"Well, we're lookin' fur two men what's come out here ter hunt. One of 'em is a tenderfoot from ther East."

The redskin looked interested.

But it was evident that he was not after the same game.

"Two men you look for got plenty money?" he asked.

"About three thousand dollars, I reckon," was the reply.

"Me look for man who got more than ten thousand dollars."

"Is that so?"

The three villains asked the question almost as if in one voice.

Bow Leg Johnny put on a wise look.

Then he got more confidential and related how he had come out to meet a miner, who had sold his claim somewhere in the mountains, and who was on his way to his home in Townsend.

The rascally Indian had learned this while doing some work on the farm that belonged to the brother of the successful miner, and he had started out for the purpose of intercepting him and robbing him of his money.

The name of the man he was after was Robert Snow, he said, and he was coming along with a Chinaman and two pack mules.

When he got through with his story he nodded to the villainous white men and said:

"You help Injun get the ten thousand and me help you get the three thousand."

"It's a go!" exclaimed Ripper Sam. "Put her there, Bow Leg!"

Jake Reed and Bull were just as eager to shake with the Comanche and call it a bargain, and when they had done so they all felt that they understood each other much better.

The redskin was a very shrewd fellow, in spite of his dirty and uncouth appearance.

He claimed to have judged things to a nicety, and as he was thoroughly acquainted with the different mountain trails he claimed to know the one the returning miner would follow.

This was only half a mile from the cave, he went on to say, and he expected to meet him inside of forty-eight hours.

"Me get plenty of talk from Farmer Snow," he added. "He tell me all about it. Me listen and say all right. Then me get sick and no work. Me go to town to see doctor. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ther doctor you're lookin' fur is a pile of money, I reckon," said Sam, joining in the laugh.

"Money heap much medicine," was the reply.

They talked it over for an hour or more, and then, having come to a satisfactory arrangement as to the division of the money when they got it, they turned in, leaving some thick pieces of wood smouldering on the fire to frighten away prowling animals.

The night passed away and morning dawned.

But the sun was at least half an hour high before the four villains were up and stirring.

They cooked some venison that they had saved from a deer that had been shot the morning before, and this was washed down with water from the little brook that rippled down the mountainside and lost itself in the wide creek many miles below.

It was not long after the meal had been finished when they heard a rifle shot not far away.

This was quickly followed by another, and then it was that the three villainous white men became uneasy.

It occurred to them right away that Young Wild West and his friends must be close at hand.

"Bow Leg," said Jake Reed, "I reckon we've got ter git ready fur business. Now, remember that ther two galoots we're after is with some friends what knows how ter fight. We've got ter go mighty careful about it."

CHAPTER X.

HOP AND "BOW LEG JOHNNY."

Wild and the rest soon appeared on the scene, and when they saw the dying grizzly and the two frightened cubs they knew what had happened without the scout telling them.

Norman Gibbs, his face wreathed in smiles, stood near his big game, rifle in hand.

"Give it to ther cubs," said the scout. "Yer might as well have ther name of cleanin' 'em all out. They'll only be after some farmer's sheep in a couple of months from now. Plug 'em, Norman!"

Crang!

The tourist fired at the nearest one and sent it rolling in the dust.

The other was scampering away, so Charlie fired at it and brought it down.

"This is what I calls putty good, fur a starter," he observed, as he looked at Wild and Arietta and grinned. "Ther tenderfoot will soon learn, I reckon."

"He's sartinly doin' fine," Dan spoke up. "That's ther pelt that must go East. I'll jest git it off."

"I'll help yer," spoke up the scout. "I'm putty good at that kind of business, though it ain't very often that I tackle grizzlies."

"Me allee samee helpee, too, so be," said Hop, who happened to reach the scene with them. "Me allee samee likee skin um glizzly."

With the three at work the pelts were soon removed from both the old bear and the cubs.

Then they started on their way, looking for more big game.

Since the grizzlies were a pest to the neighboring sheep and cattlemen, our hero was perfectly willing to help thin them out a bit.

It was hardly a common thing for grizzlies to come so close to civilization, but now and then they got so numerous that they could not all find the food they wanted.

This happened to be one of the times, it being in the fall of year, and really no hunters to speak of at work in that particular region.

The grizzly hunters, as we must call them now, pushed on, leaving Hop to follow them with the pack horse and pick up the pelts they left for him until he got a load.

Of course, there might be a deer or two, as well as some other smaller game, so it would not be very long before he got a load.

Then he would return to the camp and come back again.

Hop was just getting ready to start after them when an Indian emerged from the bushes.

It was Bow Leg Johnny.

The villains had made their way cautiously to the spot, and had got there just in time to see the rest leaving.

As he had been told how the Comanche had won the money from the three villains, the Comanche was eager to get hold of him and rob him.

Ripper Sam and his two friends went along after our hero and the rest, hoping to get a chance at them, and Bow Leg Johnny remained to fix up Hop.

"Ugh!" said the redskin, as he walked up to Hop, trying to look pleasant.

At first the Chinaman was going to call out to Young Wild West, but it occurred to him that he could take care of one dirty Indian, so he did not.

He smiled blandly and retorted:

"Ugh! Me allee samee likee big Injun, so be. Me eat muchee and allee same dlink plenty firewatler! Ugh!"

Then he put on a fierce expression of countenance and began dancing around the pack horse.

"Chinee heap much fool!" declared Bow Leg.

"Ledskin allee samee makee lillee mistakee; me allee light, so be."

"Chinee got firewater?" asked the redskin, for, since he had heard mention of it, he felt like having some.

"Me gottee lillee bit of tanglefoot," was the reply.

Then Hop produced a flask that was nearly full and showed it to the Indian.

The flask contained whisky, sure enough.

Hop had been through the belongings of the tenderfoot and his cousin and he had unearthed two quart bottles of the liquor.

He had taken the biggest part of it, putting it in half-pint flasks.

Three of the flasks he had stowed away among his own appurtenances and two he had brought with him.

He was not averse to giving the Indian a drink, but he decided to take one first himself.

"Here um velly goodee luckee," he said, as he removed the cork and placed the flask to his lips.

Hop drank about half the contents, and then he passed the flask to the redskin.

Bow Leg was not long in finishing it, and, with a sigh of satisfaction, he handed back the flask.

"You havee um cigar, so be?" Hop asked, offering him a cigar that had a pretty goodly quantity of gunpowder in it.

The Comanche smiled.

"Chinee heap much nice," he said, as he took it.

But Hop could imagine that he meant to rob him, and he did not intend that anything like that should happen.

He knew it would not take him many minutes to get to where his friends were, especially if he mounted the pack horse and made off at a swift pace.

He struck a match and handed it to the redskin, saying as he did so:

"You allee samee gittee goodee light. Me givee you velly nicee cigar, so be."

Now it so happened that Ripper Sam and his friends had not told Bow Leg Johnny about the loaded cigars they had been victimized with the night before, so the redskin took the light, with a grunt of satisfaction.

He liked to smoke, and it was not often that he got

the chance to enjoy a good cigar, such as the one he had in his hand appeared to be.

He lighted it, and, after giving a puff or two and breathing some of the smoke through his nostrils, he looked at the Chinaman and exclaimed:

"You give me your money, or me shoot!"

Out came his revolver, a rusty Colt's, but no doubt one that was in order to shoot.

"Me no gottee money," answered Hop, smiling at him, for he knew it would only be a matter of a few seconds before something else would shoot in place of the revolver.

"Chinee heap much lie! You got plenty money. Ugh!"

Bow Leg made a threatening attitude with his weapon, and then he gave another good puff at his cigar.

During the few seconds he was standing there, waiting for the cigar to explode, Hop made up his mind to make the redskin a prisoner.

He had showed himself to be a rascal pure and simple, and he felt that it would be a smart thing for him to do if he could capture him.

He would have some fun with him, if nothing more.

"Me no gottee money," he repeated. "Me givee you lillee tanglefoot and um goodee cigar, and now you allee samee wantee——"

Bang!

The cigar exploded just then and Bow Leg Johnny uttered a snort of alarm and fell over backward in a quick effort to get out of the way.

It was the root of a tree that brought this about, and before he knew what had happened Hop was upon him, winding a rope about his body.

The clever Chinaman had a lariat with him, and he surely made quick use of it.

But he did not stop until he had the redskin powerless to move his arms.

"You velly bad ledskin, so be," he declared, when he had finished the job. "You tly lob um poor Chinee, so me havee hangee you."

Bow Leg gave a cry of fear, for he realized that he was in a bad position.

The next minute there came a crashing in the bushes, and, turning his gaze in that direction, Hop was surprised to see a big grizzly bear coming toward them.

It must have been that our friends had struck a veritable nest of grizzlies in coming to that part of the mountain slope.

Hop had no use for grizzlies, since he knew he could not fool them by handing out loaded cigars.

He quickly grabbed the packhorse by the bridle and hurried from the spot.

The helpless redskin let out a yell of terror and vainly struggled to get upon his feet.

But the big bear came right on, growling fiercely.

It was more than likely that Cheyenne Charlie had been wrong in saying that the she-bear was the mate to the one that had been shot the day before, for this one was evidently the mate to the tenderfoot's grizzly victim.

Hop reached a little elevation and paused to look back upon the scene.

Just then the scout, who had heard the report as the cigar exploded, came running to the spot.

"Hully up, Misler Charlie!" cried Hop, excitedly. "Um big glizzly allee samee eatee up um bad ledskin whattee me tie, so be."

The scout quickly caught sight of the grizzly and its intended victim.

He was not the one to let even a bad Indian perish in that way, so, throwing his rifle to his shoulder, he took a quick aim and pulled the trigger.

Crang!

The grizzly staggered back, and Bow Leg Johnny let out a yell.

CHAPTER XI.

ARIETTA DISAPPEARS.

Young Wild West, Arietta and Dan Gibbs heard the report when the cigar Hop had given to the Comanche exploded, as well as the scout.

Wild and his sweetheart knew right away that it was no weapon, and they readily guessed that Hop was up to some of his tricks.

But when they caught sight of the scout running in the direction the report had come from they also hurried that way.

"What's up?" called out the Tenderfoot Tourist, who was off to the left and thought that some one had shot at a grizzly.

"It ain't no bear this time, Norman," answered his cousin. "I don't know jest exactly what it was, blamed if I do!"

"It was Hop who caused that report," Wild hastened to assure him. "I reckon——"

Just then a rifle shot sounded.

It was Charlie's shot that saved the helpless redskin from being torn to pieces by the grizzly.

The fact was that the scout had struck the tracks of the animal just before the explosion occurred, and he had been following them when he heard it.

Wild and the rest thought they had better go and see what was up, so they turned that way.

Arietta was well in the rear, and not until they got upon the scene, and were listening to Hop's explanation of the affair, did any one miss her.

"Et!" our hero called out. "Where are you?"

There was no answer.

Again he called, this time almost at the top of his voice.

But there was no response.

Mystified, for he had seen her within a few yards of him when he had started to find out what the shooting was about, Wild hastened back.

He kept right on until he reached the spot where he had last seen the girl.

Then he paused and called out, loudly.

But only the echo of his own voice came back to him.

"Something has happened, Charlie," he said to the scout, who was hurrying toward him. "Arietta was right here when I started to run, and I am sure she meant to follow us. Some villain has surprised her and carried her off, as sure as anything!"

"Maybe a grizzly got hold of her," suggested Norman, his face pale with fear and consternation.

The young man surely thought a bear had carried Arietta off, for he never once stopped to think whether or not bears were in the habit of doing such things.

Wild made a hurried examination of the ground.

It happened to be pretty soft right there, and when he found the imprints of hobnailed boots he knew that his worst fears had been realized.

Arietta had disappeared through the agency of human beings, and one of her abductors wore different boots from any of those in the party.

That was enough! The daring, young deadshot now had a clue to work upon, and off he started, following the trail through the bushes.

Cheyenne Charlie was right behind him.

Wild turned and saw him.

"Go back and question the redskin, Charlie," he said, quickly. "I reckon he knows something about this business. Find out what you can, and then come on."

"Right yer are, Wild," answered the scout, and he quickly turned and ran to the spot where the Comanche lay.

Hop had not left the prisoner, for he had heard just enough to make him believe that the Indian had not been the only one prowling around the vicinity.

Norman hesitated a moment and then ran to catch up with our hero; but Dan Gibbs followed Charlie.

The scout's face wore an expression that told plainly that he meant business.

Leaping over the carcass of the grizzly, for the huge beast had given up the ghost by this time, he grabbed the captive by the shoulder and jerked him to a sitting posture.

Out came his revolver, and, pressing the muzzle hard against the Comanche's temple, he exclaimed:

"Now, then, you sneakin' redskin galoot! How many was with yer when yer come here? Hurry up! Speak, or off will go a big piece of your head!"

"Ugh!" came the frightened response. "Me tell! Me tell!"

"Go on and tell, then."

An extra dig of the revolver's muzzle sent the redskin's head flying back.

"Three palefaces with me," said the Comanche, hurriedly, for there was no doubt but that he thought his life hung on a single thread.

"What are their names—hurry up an' tell me! I might press ther trigger of my gun a little too much, an' then there'd be a dead redskin here."

"Sam, Jake and Bull," replied the Comanche.

"Ah! I knowed it ther minute yer said they was three palefaces. Now, jest tell us all about it, you pizen-lookin' coyote!"

"Me tell!"

"He did tell, too, not leaving out anything, even to the fact that he was looking for the returning miner.

Cheyenne Charlie looked at him in disgust.

"What is your name, Redskin?" he asked, again turning his revolver upon him.

"Bow Leg Johnny," came the reply.

"All right, Mister Bow Leg Johnny! I reckon you're

about ther worst coward of a Comanche I ever run across. But you'll git your medicine, all right. Hop, you take care of ther measly coyote. I'm goin' ter foller up Wild. He won't be long in findin' Arietta, I reckon."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie," replied the Chinaman.

Charlie now bounded away, and, taking the cue that his services might be needed, Dan Gibbs started after him.

There was no difficulty in following the trail Wild had taken, so Charlie moved along at a lively pace.

Dan soon caught up with him.

But as yet neither had seen anything of the young deadshot or the tenderfoot.

The trail led on around the bush-covered slope, and when they at last reached a rocky ledge it became lost to them.

But it was evident that those who had seized Arietta and carried her away had passed that way, and that Wild and the tenderfoot had done likewise.

There was really no other way they could have gone, without pushing through the bushes on the right.

But this had not been done, as the scout's practiced eyes told him.

They went along the ledge cautiously, for it was a bad place to be caught by an enemy, and there was no telling just what might have happened to the two who had preceded them.

Once at the end of the ledge they came to a sharp ascent between two big, bowl-shaped rocks.

But there was no soft earth there to show them any tracks, so they went on up.

Once at the top, they came upon fresh footprints.

"I reckon we're on ther right trail, all right," said the scout, in a whisper. "Jest be ready fur somethin' ter happen putty soon, Dan."

"I'll be right there, Charlie," was the reply.

Dan was a man of considerable experience, and, though he had never actually courted danger much, he was not the one to flee.

The trail led on through the thicket to the left, and when the scout saw a piece of silk fringe hanging to a bush he at once recognized it as having come from Arietta's dress.

It puzzled him to think that Wild had left it there, however, and he came to a pause.

"I reckon somethin's wrong ag'in," he said. "If Wild had seen that he would have picked it up—if he could, I mean."

"What do you think, then?" asked Dan, looking surprised.

"Well, it might be that Wild run inter a trap ther galoots set fur him; an' it might be that he didn't come this way."

"Can't we tell by the footprints?"

"No; they ain't plain enough fur that."

The hunter shrugged his shoulders.

"There's only one thing we kin do, an' that's keep on goin', I s'pose," he said, after a short interval of silence.

"Yes; come on."

They had not taken more than a dozen steps when the whizz of a lariat was heard.

Charlie dropped flat to the ground as quick as a flash.

Then he suddenly saw his companion jerked from his feet, a flexible rope about his body.

The scout saw a man at the other end of the rope, and as quickly as he could he raised his revolver and fired.

As the report rang out there was a sharp cry of pain and the rope slackened.

Dan lost no time in freeing himself, and then he quickly followed the scout's example and got behind a rock.

"I reckon ther three galoots has got Wild an' ther tenderfoot," said the scout, shaking his head, as he kept a sharp watch ahead. "But yer kin jest bet your life that they ain't goin' ter git us!"

Crack!

The report of a revolver sounded and a bullet hit the rock.

"Wow! Help! I'm shot!" yelled the scout, as though in great agony.

A yell of derision sounded, and then a man came running that way, revolver in hand.

It was Bull. The blood was streaming from his left hand, showing that he was the one who had been hit.

CHAPTER XII.

BULL SHUFFLES OUT OF THE GAME.

The three villains were not long in finding Young Wild West and the rest, after they left the Indian to take charge of Hop Wah.

But they did nothing more than to watch them closely, for they were all afraid to attack them, either openly or from under cover of the bushes.

They hung around, however, and soon a chance came that they could not resist.

It had not occurred to them to try and make a prisoner of Arietta until they saw her temporarily alone.

Then Jake Reed became imbued with the idea and it was promptly acted upon.

So well did they work it that the girl was seized and overpowered before she could utter a cry.

It took all three of them to do it, but it was done quickly and conclusively.

Arietta was borne away, her own handkerchief stuffed in her mouth to prevent her from making an outcry.

The fact was that neither of the men had figured on what the outcome of such a proceeding would be. Reed had suggested it without thinking, and his companions had acted in the same way.

But when they hurriedly left the spot they began to think.

What to do with their fair captive they did not know.

But they must get away, so they kept on going.

"Jumpin' catamounts!" exclaimed Ripper Sam, as he hastened along with Reed, who was carrying the girl. "We'll catch it for this! Make ther gal run, Jake; we'll git along faster. You can't expect ter carry her till we git a hidin' place."

"That's right," answered the villain, and then Arietta was put on the ground.

"Trot along, now, miss!" exclaimed Bull, showing her

his revolver. "Yer ought ter be able ter guess that we ain't ther ones as kin be fooled with. We've got ourselves in a muss by catchin' yer, an' yer kin bet that we ain't goin' ter suffer any fur it, not if we kin help it. Jest trot along, now!"

The girl realized that she could not gain anything by refusing to obey, so she did as she was directed, though not very fast.

In this way they reached the ledge a few minutes later.

As they went along the ledge a thought struck Jake Reed, who was much the cooler of the three.

"I reckon Young Wild West will be right after us, boys," he remarked. "So here's ther spot fur us ter lay fur him. If we kin manage ter catch him I reckon we'll be what-yer might call right on top."

"But what's ter be done with him, if we do catch him?" asked Ripper Sam.

"Do with him? Why, kill ther young galoot, of course."

"If we done that we'll have ter kill all ther others, or else git killed ourselves, I reckon."

"Well, if we don't kill Young Wild West we might tie him somewhere, after takin' what money he's got," said Bull.

"I reckon that would be ther best way. Tie him till we git ther rest, anyhow."

"Well, come on up here. By jingo! there's a better place than this! See ther bushes up there? We'll lay there fur 'em."

"Which way is our horses from here?" asked Bull, who was the first to remember that they had left their horses near the cave when they started out to find out what the shooting was about.

"Right below us, less than half a mile," answered Reed. "As soon as we catch Young Wild West, an' whoever else comes along, we'll make fur ther cave, takin' 'em along with us. We may stay there, or we may mount an' ride away. That ain't ter be said jest yet. Circumstances will alter cases, I reckon."

The villains had brought their lariats with them, and, forgetful of the fact that the redskin might have been caught, they prepared to trap our hero when he came along.

They had hardly got ready for him when they heard him coming.

As soft as the boy's footsteps were, they could hear the sounds.

But once over the rocky part of the trail and they could no longer hear them.

Just then, however, others were heard.

The Tenderfoot Tourist was not nearly as cautious as was our hero, and he was letting his presence be known.

It so happened that he came upon Wild just as he reached the top of the ascent.

Wild was expecting something to happen, and he had both eyes and ears open.

The young deadshot was remarkably cool, for that was his way, no matter what the conditions were.

When he was a small boy he learned that getting excited over a thing was the worst thing one could do, and he had profited by the experience.

He motioned Norman Gibbs to tread softly, and then,

revolver in hand, he made his way into the bushes, through which the trail went.

Suddenly, without the least warning, a rope encircled his body and he was pulled into the thicket.

Whizz!

A lariat caught the tenderfoot a few seconds later and he was treated in the same manner.

Wild uttered a sharp cry to warn Norman, but that was all, for a heavy hand was pressed over his mouth.

But, no matter what he might have said, it would have done no good, for Norman was not enough trained in such matters to dodge the lariat.

Two of them had hold of our hero, while the third easily mastered the tenderfoot.

In a very short time both were disarmed and bound.

Then the villains coolly went through them and relieved them of what money they had.

It so happened that Norman had all his money on his person, and they were much elated at getting hold of it.

Wild had considerable money, too, and it was received by the three with no little satisfaction.

Arietta sat on the ground, unable to do a thing toward helping her dashing young lover and his companion.

Wild looked at her and smiled, as he was forced up close to her.

"They have got all the best of it now, Et," he said. "But it won't be for long. They won't stand a ghost of a show pretty soon."

"We won't, eh?" spoke up Jake Reed. "We'll see about that, Young Wild West. We've got your money, an' it's a mighty sure thing that yer won't ever git it back, even if yer are let live! Since we've had sich good luck at catchin' you, we'll try an' git ther rest. It are most likely that they'll be along lookin' fur yer putty soon."

"S'pose we tie 'em ter ther trees over there?" suggested Bull. "Then we'll have a good show at ther rest."

"Jest ther thing!" exclaimed Reed. "Go ahead an' tie 'em to ther trees."

Three trees right close together were selected and the prisoners were quickly bound to them.

Then the villains sat down and waited for some one else to appear.

They were pretty patient about it, and, as the reader knows, they made a good try to increase the number of prisoners they had when the scout and Dan Gibbs came along.

But it was a failure, and when Bull found that he had been wounded on the left hand by the scout's bullet he grew suddenly desperate and fired a shot with his revolver.

The ruse the scout worked fooled him completely, and, thinking that he had wounded one of the searchers, he bounded forward like a shot, bent on shooting the other the moment he laid eyes upon him.

But Cheyenne Charlie was not the man to fool with.

Crack!

Bull threw up his hands and fell to the ground, a groan escaping his lips.

Ripper Sam and Jake Reed were thunderstruck when they saw that their companion did not get up.

They were crouching behind the bushes, fully expecting that a rush would be made for them.

If there had been it is doubtful if their aim would have proven accurate just then.

But the scout and Dan were not taking any such chances.

They gave the villains the credit of being much more dangerous than they really were.

"Hello, Wild!" called out the scout, after a short silence.

"Hello, Charlie!"

"Is Arietta there?"

"Yes, and the tenderfoot, too."

"Are yer all right?"

"Well, we're tied to trees, so we can't move."

"Shet up!" roared Jake Reed. "Shet up, or we'll kill yer!"

"Don't yer try nothin' like that, you sneakin' galoot!" shouted the scout. "I'm gittin' ready ter draw a bead on yer now. When I pull ther trigger you're goin' ter step out! You hear what I say!"

This had a wonderful effect on the two villains.

They held a short, whispered conversation and then started to creep away from the spot.

They had barely got out of sight behind the bushes when a growl sounded off to the right and a big grizzly came toward the three prisoners.

Just why there were so many of them around our hero did not know; but he did know that they were in danger.

"Come here, Charlie!" he called out. "The two galoots have lit out, and here comes a grizzly after us!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VILLAINS KEEP AT THEIR GAME.

Ripper Sam and Jake Reed would not have dared to attempt to recover the body of Bull, even if they had not been in an awful hurry to get away.

They could easily judge how quickly Cheyenne Charlie would drop them if they showed themselves.

They made for the cave as fast as they could.

The face of Sam was rather pale, and there was a hunted look in his eyes which his companion could not fail to notice.

"Yer ain't gittin' scared, are yer, Sam?" Reed asked, trying to make out that he was entirely indifferent.

"See here!" came the reply. "Bull was a pard to you, wasn't he?"

"He sartinly was, an' a good one, too."

"An' yet you don't seem ter mind it 'cause he's passed in his chips."

"What's ther use? He got his medicine, an' that's all there is to it! It wouldn't pay me ter set down an' cry over it, would it? Then, ag'in, it makes all ther more money fur me. There's only two ter divide up ther boodle with now. As soon as we git to ther cave you had better hand over half of it, Sam. I was satisfied ter let you keep it till we got through with Young Wild West; an' I reckon we're about through with him now. I am, as fur as wantin' ter see anything more of him is concerned."

"No, nor I don't want nothin' more ter do with him, either. Hello! Hear that yellin' back there? An' did yer hear ther rifle shot jest now? I wonder what it's all about?"

"Why, didn't yer hear Young Wild West yell out that there was a grizzly comin' fur 'em, jest as we left? These woods is full of ther pesky bears. There's so many of 'em that they all can't git enough ter eat. I jest wish no one had been close enough ter cut 'em loose, an' a big grizzly got after 'em! He'd make short work of Young Wild West an' ther Tenderfoot Tourist!"

"An' ther gal, too, Jake. Yer furgit about her, I reckon. She was tied, as well as they was."

"Well, that's all right. She could git tore ter pieces by a grizzly's claws, too, as fur as I'm concerned."

"But she's sich a putty gal, yer know."

"That won't make no difference. She could be as ugly as sin, an' it wouldn't make no difference ter us—or a grizzly, either."

Jake Reed actually smiled when he said this, which showed that he was beginning to feel easier.

The two were hastening through the woods while the conversation was being carried on, and the first thing they knew they came in sight of the cave they were heading for.

"Well, what is it, go or stay here?" asked Sam, anxiously.

"I reckon we'd better go," was the reply. "But jest shell out half that money first. I want ter make sure of that. If I do go under I want my share in my pocket when it happens. There's nothin' like takin' yer wealth with yer, as fur as yer kin."

Again the villain smiled.

But his companion saw nothing humorous about it.

He hurriedly pulled out the two sums of money that had been taken from Young Wild West and the Tenderfoot Tourist, and then the two quickly counted it over.

"Putty nigh four thousand!" exclaimed Reed, jubilantly. "That's a mighty good haul, I reckon. I wonder how ther redskin galoot will make out? Ha, ha, ha! I s'pose Young Wild West's pards got him. Well, if they did, it's a mighty good thing. What do we want with a greasy, old redskin hangin' around after us, anyhow?"

It took some little time to count out the money and divide it, and when it was done the two men mounted their horses, after first turning loose the ones Bull and the Comanche had left there.

They took with them all they had, too, as they did not know just when they were going to strike civilization.

The fact that they had robbed Young Wild West was enough to make them feel like getting as far away from the vicinity as they could.

They struck out almost due west, and in less than ten minutes they came upon a wagon trail.

"This must be ther regular trail that leads inter Townsend," said Reed, as he looked around to get his bearings.

"It is," was the reply of his companion. "I've been here afore, an' I know it. This is ther way ther galoot ther Injun was talkin' about was ter come, most likely."

"I hope it is, an' we meet him, that's all."

"Well, I don't care whether we meet ther man or not."

I reckon I've got about as much as I expected ter git when I hired out with Dan Gibbs an' his tenderfoot cousin' and that's sayin' a whole lot."

"I know it is sayin' a whole lot. But jest think of me! I've got a blamed sight more than I expected ter git when I started out."

"An' you've lost yer pard, too."

"Well, what of it? Don't talk about it, will yer? Bull was as good a pard as ever a man had; but he's gone now, an' that's ther end of him. There ain't no use in fetchin' it up about him every once in a while."

"All right, then; we'll drop him. We'll look out fur ourselves now, an' see that we don't git ther same fate."

It never seemed to occur to the two villains that they would be pursued.

Consequently they did not ride as fast as they could have done, nor did they get away as soon.

Just why this never occurred to them, it is hard to say.

If a person is robbed of a goodly sum of money it is only natural that he will try to get it back.

But the two men simply thought of what they had got, and they were now going to get to some other part of the State.

They rode along the trail for about ten miles and then they suddenly saw two horsemen approaching, with a couple of pack mules following behind them.

"Hooray!" cried Reed, in a subdued tone of voice. "Here comes ther galoot ther Injun was lookin' fur. See, he's got a heathen Chinee with him!"

"That's right, Jake," said Sam, his eyes brightening. "I s'pose we may as well git what he's got, too. It'll make it all ther better fur us."

"Sartin. We must have it. Now, jest leave it ter me. I'll fix him putty quick. We won't let him know that we're anything wrong till we git talking to him. Then, when I whips out my gun an' covers him you'll know what ter do."

"All right, Jake. We're in it now, so we may as well go our whole length."

The two galloped along the trail and rapidly neared the approaching pair.

To all appearances, the man might have been a hunter, with a Chinaman cook, for there was some game slung over the back of one of the mules, and some pelts as well.

But there was almost a certainty that it was the returning miner, and that he had as much as the redskin had said.

As Reed and Ripper Sam rode up and halted before the man and the Chinaman they called out a cheery "Good mornin', stranger!" and the horseman returned the salute.

"Which way are yer bound?" Reed asked him, while the sleepy Chinaman looked on indifferently.

"I'm bound fur Townsend," was the reply. "Which way are you goin'?"

"We're headin' fur ther mines," answered Ripper Sam.

"Is that so? Well, if yer don't have no better luck than I did it won't pay yer much."

But the way the man spoke showed that he was simply trying to throw them off.

They both felt sure of that.

"So yer didn't have much luck at minin', eh?" queried Reed.

"Not much," was the reply.

"An' yer wouldn't advise us ter try our luck, then?"

"Well, I don't want to advise yer either way, strangers. Yer kin do as yer please about it. Do yer belong in Townsend, or anywhere around here?"

"We both belong in Townsend," Sam hastened to answer.

"An' you're headin' fur a minin' camp?"

"Yes; that's right."

"Ain't got much of an outfit, have yer?" and the miner shrugged his shoulders.

"No; but we've got ther money ter buy one when we git there."

"Oh! Well, that is all right, then. I wish yer mighty good luck, that's all I kin say."

"Hold on, stranger!"

Jake Reed whipped out a revolver as quick as a flash and covered the man.

"What do you want?" was the surprised query.

"We want ther money you're fetchin' back from ther minin' camp yer was at. Come! Shell out! We ain't goin' ter stand no foolin', 'cause we knowed yer was comin', an' we figured on takin' what you've got."

At this the Chinaman let out a yell for help, and, turning his horse, galloped back over the trail.

Crack!

Ripper Sam fired and shot him dead before he was twenty yards away.

Seeing this, the miner gave in, his face now as pale as death.

"It is too bad," he said, with a groan. "To think that I could get so near home without being bothered, an' now I've got to lose all I've got! Ain't there no one ter help me?"

"I reckon there is, my friend!"

As the startling reply came Young Wild West darted from behind a bend in the trail and stood before them.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW BOW LEG JOHNNY CAME TO HIS END.

As Wild called out to him Cheyenne Charlie bounded forward like a shot, his rifle ready for use.

The scout knew that he would stand little show with a revolver, unless it was at very close range, so he was ready for business.

He was just in time to see the grizzly ambling slowly toward the three prisoners, and, with a nod of satisfaction, he threw the rifle to his shoulder and fired.

Down went the bear in a heap, for the bullet had pierced its heart.

Then our hero led in a cheer, for he felt like letting the villains know that they were all right.

Dan Gibbs hurried forward and assisted in releasing them, and our hero was not long in gathering up his belt

and weapons, which the villains had neglected to take with them.

Then, after matters had been explained by all interested, the young deadshot said:

"I reckon we'll have to stop the grizzly hunt for a while now. The two galoots must not be allowed to get away with the money they took from us, Norman."

"No," was the reply. "I can't afford to lose my money that way. If I did I guess I would have to strike out for home, and not finish my tour of the West. We will get the horses and ride after them, Wild."

"That's the idea. Come on, everybody!"

Taking his sweetheart by the hand, our hero led the way back to the spot, where Hop was guarding the red-skin prisoner.

Arietta's face was radiant now, for she was happy to think that her peril had not lasted long.

Hop was sitting near his captive, and when he saw Wild and Arietta coming his face broke into a happy smile.

"Hoolay!" he shouted. "Me velly glad to see you, Missy Aletta. You makee poor Chinees allee samee scare, so be."

"Well, I have a way of always turning up, Hop," replied the girl, with a laugh. "The villains caught me very neatly. But it is all right now."

"An' one of ther galoots is dead, Hop," spoke up the scout. "He was lookin' fur it, so I give him a bullet."

"Servee allee same light," said Hop, nodding his approval.

"Let's get to the camp in a hurry, for we must get the horses and get after them," said Wild. "They have got horses, and the chances are that they are riding away now. It may be a long chase, but we must catch up with them, and that is all there is to it!"

"Yes, we must catch up with them and get back the money they stole from us," declared the Tenderfoot Tourist.

Charlie cut the bonds that held the Indian's ankles together.

"Fetch him along, Hop," he said, as he hastened after the rest.

"Allee light," replied Hop; "me allee samee fetchee."

Our friends ran all the way to the camp.

Jim was surprised to hear what had happened, but he lost no time in helping get the horses saddled.

It was decided that Norman Gibbs was to remain at the camp with the girls and the two Chinamen, to look after their prisoner, while Wild and his two partners and Dan went after the fugitive thieves.

The four were soon riding away.

Then Hop amused the girls by relating how he had captured the redskin.

"Me allee samee blowee up with um cigar," he said. "Me havee gittee plenty cigars, for me havee allee samee plenty fun, so be."

"That's right," said Norman, laughing heartily. "You certainly can have fun with loaded cigars, Hop. I know what fun it is, for I have experienced it myself."

Bow Leg Johnny was listening to the talk, and he seemed to be very much interested.

It was probable that he did not know what happened to him until he heard the Chinaman telling about it.

"Chinees have cigar that make heap much noise," he said.

"You wantee smokee?" Hop asked, quickly.

The Indian shook his head in the negative.

"Injun no want to smoke; he want to eat," he answered.

"You hungry?" Hop asked, winking at the rest.

"Injun hungry; eat much," was the reply.

"Allee light, len. You havee your breakfast, so be?"

"Injun hungry," was all Bow Leg would say.

Hop went over to where the provisions were kept.

He found a corn muffin that had been left from the morning meal, and, splitting it, he put a juicy piece of venison on one side and a sliver of stone, which he picked up from the ground, on the other.

Then he took a vial from his pocket and sprinkled a generous quantity of reddish powder on the meat.

This was cayenne pepper to season the sandwich he was making.

When he was ready he placed the muffin together.

The next thing he did was to empty some of the cayenne pepper into a tin cup, filling the cup with coffee afterward.

When this was stirred to his liking he carried the lunch he had prepared to the prisoner.

When Bow Leg Johnny said he was hungry he spoke the truth.

He was always that way, in fact, but particularly so just now, for he had not been living very high for the past week.

The tenderfoot and the girls knew that the clever Chinaman was playing a trick on him, but they did not care, so long as he did not injure him.

"Untie um led galoot's hands, my blother," said Hop to Wing. "He no gittee way, so be."

No one objected, and, finding that they did not, the cook obeyed.

Then Hop handed over his sandwich and cup.

Bow Leg Johnny would perhaps have thought something was wrong if he had not been very hungry.

As it was, he pushed the sandwich to his mouth and made a bite, no doubt intending to take half of it at one bite.

But when his teeth fetched up on the flat piece of stone he got a jar to his nerves that could have been anything but pleasant.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed.

Then he pulled the sandwich apart, and, throwing out the stone, forced the whole morsel into his mouth.

He gave a couple of strong chews and then swallowed it.

The coffee went to his mouth to swallow it down, and in less than three seconds the cup was emptied.

There was a short silence and then the redskin gave a gasp and went rolling on the ground, as though he had suddenly been taken with convulsions.

"Hip hi!" yelled Hop. "Ledskin allee samee velly muchee hungry, so be. Hoolay!"

He danced around in glee, while the rest laughed heartily.

The pepper must have burned the Indian's stomach.

fiercely, but he was not suffering as much as he made out, however.

He rolled around and managed to get among the bushes.

Then, all of a sudden, he sprang to his feet and ran like a deer from the camp.

This action was so sudden that he got a good start before any one could make a move to stop him.

Hop realized that his captive was escaping, and he was the first to run after him.

Hop could run pretty fast, but the Comanche was running to gain his liberty, and that lent him speed.

But the strangulation from the pepper handicapped him some, and the Chinaman rapidly gained upon him.

After Hop came Norman Gibbs, his rifle in his hand.

The girls ran along in his wake.

A little over a hundred yards from the camp Hop overtook the fugitive.

He grabbed him by the shoulder, and the next second the two were rolling in tight embrace on the ground.

Bow Leg Johnny had no weapons, so he could not hurt the Chinaman much, anyhow.

But he was altogether too powerful for Hop, though, and he was getting the best of him.

"Stoppee!" yelled the Chinaman. "Lettee go my neckee! Me allee samee goodee Chineese. Help! Mislerr Wild! Mislerr Wild!"

Laughing heartily at the really comical situation, the Tenderfoot Tourist ran up to the assistance of the Celestial.

He managed to get the Indian off his opponent, but Bow Leg Johnny did not stay to be made a prisoner again.

He hit Norman a heavy blow on the chin, and then, as the young man went staggering backward, he grabbed his rifle and ran into the bushes.

The girls came to an involuntary halt.

A desperate Indian with a rifle in his possession was not a pleasant one to have near them.

Crang!

The redskin fired a shot and the bullet clipped a lock of hair from Arietta's head.

The girl knew that something had to be done, and she acted very quickly.

Up went her revolver.

Crack!

Bow Leg Johnny uttered a sharp cry and dropped.

His career had come to a sudden end.

"I didn't want to do that," Arietta explained, as the tenderfoot recovered his rifle and they started back for the camp. "But if I had not shot him he would surely have shot some of us."

"You're a brave girl, Miss Arietta," said the tourist, admiringly. "Young Wild West may well be proud to have such a girl for a sweetheart."

"Oh, there are plenty like me, I think," was the smiling reply. "That is not the first Indian I have shot."

CHAPTER XV.

THE THIEVES ARE ROUNDED UP.

Wild rode along at the head of his partners and the hunter, and the ground was rapidly covered.

They had no fear that the villains would be lying in ambush for them now, since they were quite sure that they were making the best of their time in flight.

They followed the trail to the cave, and then it was easy to pick it up and go on till they reached the wagon trail.

"Boys, I reckon they've had a pretty good start, but we ought to catch them by noon," said our hero. "Come right along, now!"

They rode hard along the trail, and about ten miles further on what was their surprise to catch sight of four horsemen at a halt in the distance.

It was a good half mile away, but as they reined in their horses and took a look it was easy to see that two of the men were the ones they were after.

"I reckon this is a sort of a surprise, eh, Wild?" said the scout, smiling grimly. "I allowed that they was a good miles further than this. I wonder who they are that they're talkin' ter? One of 'em is a Chineese, all right."

"Come on; we'll soon find out all about it, Charlie. Don't let them hear us, if it can be helped."

Gauging the proper distance, our hero started ahead, and as they rode down into a hollow the men disappeared from their view.

When they thought they were getting pretty close they brought their horses down to a walk.

In just about two minutes from the time they had caught sight of the horsemen Wild dismounted and started for a bend in the trail on foot.

He could hear voices, and as a revolver shot sounded he started forward on a run.

He was just in time to appear before the astonished villains, as has been told, and as he answered the miner's appeal for help he stepped forward and covered the two thieves.

"Hold up your hands, you scoundrels!" he exclaimed. "I reckon you've traveled the length of your rope. Up with your hands!"

They were caught, and they knew it, so both Ripper Sam and Jake Reed obeyed the command.

"I am mighty glad you showed up jest as yer did, young feller," said the miner, as he hurriedly dismounted. "The galoots shot my Chinaman, and I suppose they would have fixed me the same way before they got through with me."

Just then Charlie, Jim and Dan Gibbs reached the scene.

They quickly disarmed the ruffians and then proceeded to bind them.

Wild started for the spot where the Chinaman was lying.

As he neared it he was agreeably surprised to see the Celestial arise to a sitting posture and look around him, as though he had just awakened from an ordinary sleep.

"I reckon your Chinaman isn't dead, after all, my friend," he said, calling out to the miner.

"What!" cried the astonished man. "Why, he dropped like a log when one of the scoundrels fired."

"Me allee samee faller off um horse, Mislerr Snow," said the Chinaman, rising to his feet. "Me gittee pletty goodee shakee-up."

"Ther heathen galoot talks about ther same as our two does, Jim," remarked the scout, as a grin overspread his tanned countenance.

"Well, they all talk about the same, I reckon," was the reply.

Wild made an examination of the Chinaman and found that the bullet had grazed the side of his skull, and this must have stunned him and caused him to fall as though dead.

"How do you feel, Jing Ling?" the miner asked.

"Allee light," was the reply. "Um bad men allee same gittee catchee! Lat velly goodee!"

Wild soon learned that the miner's name was Robert Snow, and that he was bound to his brother's farm, near the settlement called Townsend.

"Well, I reckon you'll get through all right," our hero said, after he had been told how the man had escaped anything like danger until he was met by the two ruffians.

"I reckon we'd better git what belongs to you an' ther tenderfoot, eh, Wild?" Charlie ventured, after a pause in the conversation.

"Yes, Charlie," was the reply. "Perhaps they will tell you just where the money is, so we won't have to make a search for it."

"Half of it is in my pocket an' half in his," spoke up Ripper Sam, nodding to his companion in misery. "Right in my right-hand trousers pocket you'll find ther money."

"You're polite about it, too, ain't yer?" said the scout, with a grin. "Well, that's ther way ter be, I reckon. Yer might be treated a little nicer when ther rope is put around yer neck."

Ripper Sam turned as white as a sheet.

"Yer ain't goin' ter hang us, are yer?" he cried.

"I don't jest know what Young Wild West means ter do with yer—whether it will be hangin' or shootin'," answered the scout, as he found the money and handed it to Wild.

"Mine's in my left pocket," said Reed, hurriedly.

"Not yours—but mine!" corrected Wild, as he reached in the pocket to get it.

"Well, I sorter thought it was mine after we divided it up. I made a mistake in thinkin' so, it seems."

In a few minutes the prisoners were tied upon the backs of their own horses, and then the party was ready to set out.

Robert Snow was more than pleased at finding such good friends, and he declared that they must stop at his brother's ranch before they left the Rockies.

Wild promised him that they would, since it would not be much out of their way.

"But we have got to finish our grizzly hunt first," he added. "We have a Tenderfoot Tourist in our party, and we promised to give him all he wanted of that kind of sport."

"Well, I hope he don't get too much of it. Grizzlies ain't tame birds, not by a good deal."

"I reckon not," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "If you could have seen him treed by one a little before dark last night you'd have laughed. But he didn't git discouraged, an' this mornin' he shot one. I reckon it ain't every ten-

derfoot tourist what kin go back East an' say he shot a grizzly, speakin' ther truth when he says it."

"No! I should say not!"

In a few minutes they were on the move.

Ripper Sam started to plead for his life with our hero, but he received no satisfaction.

At length they reached the camp, and when our hero and his partners heard how the Indian had been shot by Arietta they were much surprised.

But no one was grieved.

Wild decided to take a walk and view the body of the Indian his sweetheart had shot in self-defence.

Arietta went with him to show the way, and, seeing where they were heading for, Norman Gibbs followed.

As they neared the spot they heard a growl.

"Another grizzly, as I live!" exclaimed Wild. "I had no idea that there were any down here. The woods is full of them, as the saying goes. Run and get my rifle, Et!"

The girl hastened to do as he requested, and then Wild, followed by the tenderfoot, pushed his way through the bushes.

There was the grizzly squatting beside the body of Bow Leg Johnny, preparatory to making a meal of the remains.

As the savage animal made a move to bit into the flesh of the body Wild fired a shot with his revolver.

He did not want to allow anything like that, even if it was a dead Indian.

The bullet pierced one of the beast's eyes, but did not reach the brain, and, with an angry snort, it came tearing for the two.

"Run, Norman!" exclaimed Wild. "You don't stand any show with a revolver. His hide is too tough. It would take a dozen shots to fix him, and then he wouldn't be dead yet."

The tenderfoot started to run, but his toe caught upon the root of a tree and he went sprawling upon his face.

Then, much quicker than Wild thought for, the grizzly leaped forward and struck at the Tenderfoot Tourist.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

There was only one way to save the Tenderfoot Tourist, and our hero realized it.

As Norman made an effort to get up the enraged beast darted for him again.

Whipping out his bowie knife, Young Wild West met his grizzly.

The blade flashed in the air, and, dodging a blow from one of the powerful paws of the animal, he sent it deep into the left side.

Back he leaped, just in time to escape another blow.

The grizzly staggered a few steps backward and then fell.

Norman, his face very pale, now stood at the side of the dashing boy-hero of the West.

"That's the second time you have saved me, Young Wild West!" he exclaimed, fervently. "I thank you for it, and I assure you that I am done with hunting grizzlies!"

As they walked back to the camp they saw Hop and

Wing engaged in a very earnest conversation with Jing Ling, the servant of Snow.

Cheyenne Charlie grinned and shrugged his shoulders.

"Ain't that a putty picter?" he asked. "They all look alike, blamed if they don't!"

As the conversation was being carried on in genuine Chinese, no one could understand a word of it; but it was evident that Hop was doing a little bragging, by the way he was acting.

What was more, Jing Ling seemed to doubt his veracity.

"What's the matter, Wing?" asked Wild, looking at the cook.

"Um Jing Ling no believee my blother velly muchee smartee Chinee," was the ready answer.

"Oh, is that it? Well, why don't he prove it to him?"

"Me plove allee samee velly muchee quickee, Misler Wild," spoke up Hop. "Me tellee um Jing Ling me plantee allee samee fivee dollee bill, and makee whole lottee fivee dollee bills glow in fivee minutes. He say no, so me plove it."

"Well, go ahead. We'll all watch you while you do it."

Hop was more than willing.

He pulled out his big, yellow silk handkerchief, and, after holding it up, so all might see it, nodded to his intended victim and said:

"You givee me um bill, and me makee velly quickee."

Jing Ling quickly produced a five-dollar bill and handed it over.

Then Hop carefully dug a little hole in the ground with his fingers and, placing the bill in it, appeared to cover it up with dirt.

The clever Chinaman went through a lot of motions that seemed very mysterious, even to the tenderfoot, and then he suddenly jumped in the air and exclaimed:

"Allee light!"

He lifted the handkerchief and, sure enough, a number of five-dollar bills, ruffled into all shapes, were lying on the ground.

The jaw of Jing Ling dropped.

It was plain that he believed that Hop had managed to make the bill he had planted produce the rest.

He watched in silence as Hop picked out the bills, one by one, and smoothed them out on his knee.

But when he saw him place the roll in his pocket he exclaimed:

"Whatee mattee? Me wantee my fivee dollee bill."

"You allee samee loseee," was the bland reply. "Me plantee in um glound."

The surprised Chinaman at once began digging for the bill.

He struck a piece of green paper right away and, thinking he had it, he leaped to his feet.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Cheyenne Charlie. "It ain't nothin' but ther stamp off a cigar box!"

Jing Ling was a pretty angry Chineese.

But there was no use in arguing the question with Hop. He talked him right out of it, and finally made him believe that it was all right.

"Me takee um piecee papee and puttee in um glound, and len makee turnee in um fivee dollee bill, so be," Hop

declared, for he knew Wild would surely make him give the Chinaman's money back.

Jing Ling wanted to see it done, so the clever fellow proceeded with his sleight-of-hand performance.

He buried the piece of paper, to all appearance, and then, putting the handkerchief over the spot, went through his outlandish performance again.

"Lere!" he exclaimed, suddenly, as he sprang to his feet. "You takee up um handkelchief and you allee samee findee um fivee dollee bill."

Jing Ling bent over and lifted the handkerchief.

Then he dug down into the dirt, and, sure enough, he brought out a five dollar bill.

"There! I reckon that makes you square now," said Wild, looking at the surprised and satisfied Chinaman.

"Hop is too much for you, so you had better not say that he isn't a smart man again."

"Me no say some more, so be," was the retort.

The balance of the day was spent in hunting for game other than grizzlies, though two more were met with and despatched by Charlie and Dan Gibbs.

They had all had enough of that kind of hunting, for there had proved to be so many grizzlies in that particular section that hunting them got really monotonous.

Norman Gibbs had the pelt of the grizzly he had shot, and he was satisfied.

The next morning they set out for Townsend, taking the prisoners with them, and quite a number of pelts and some game.

Though the Grizzly hunt in the Rockies had not lasted very long, it had been a lively one while it did last.

Anyhow, all were satisfied with it.

Townsend was reached in due time, and when the prisoners were turned over to the authorities and Ripper Sam made a full confession, there was not a little excitement in the place.

But right here we may as well state that Ripper Sam and Jake Reed were duly tried and convicted, and then sent to prison to serve a rather lengthy term.

Reader, this about ends the story of "Young Wild West and the Tenderfoot Tourist," for, after leaving the young man from Connecticut at Townsend, they never ran across him again.

But they all hoped that he had been satisfied with his tour of the West, and had nothing but good wishes for him, as he was a first-class fellow.

THE END.

Read "YOUNG WILD WEST ROUTING THE 'GHOST DANCERS'; or, ARIETTA AND THE SNAKE CHARMER," which will be the next number (299) of "Wild West Weekly."

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SOME GOOD ARTICLES.

Eight or ten rocks, averaging about ten pounds each, are on exhibition at the Santa Fe depot in Ottawa. Each was found in the center of a bale of hay, skilfully concealed from the casual observer. The hay was taken from a car that was on fire, and the stone "ballast" was discovered when the bales were torn open to extinguish the flames. Every bale contained a rock.

The highest tree in the world, so far as has been ascertained, is an Australian gum tree of the species of eucalyptus regnans, which stands in the Cape Otway range. It is no less than 415 feet high. Gum trees grow very fast. There is one in Florida which shot up forty feet in four years, and another in Guatemala which grew 120 feet in twelve years. This corresponds to a rise of ten feet in a year, or nearly a foot a month.

They have a boy at Weymouth, England, who is puzzling the doctors and many other folks. Although only thirteen years of age, he is almost six feet tall. He has had four sets of teeth, and is now cutting the fifth. He can run backward as fast as the ordinary boy can run forward, and he can see as far with the naked eye as any one else can with binoculars. They are expecting to see the boy shed his arms and legs and grow new ones before he quits doing strange things.

The Krupp ironworks give employment at present to about 53,000 workmen and 5,000 engineers and officials. Of this total of 58,000 persons, 40,000 persons are employed at the steelworks and coal mines at Essen, 4,000 in the iron mines, 4,000 at Rheinhausen, 4,000 at Magdeburg, 5,000 at the Germania shipyard at Kiel, and 1,000 at the steelworks at Armen. Among the leading specialties of the firm are guns, armor-plates, rifles, shells, boilers, rails, axles, tires, propellers, tubes, etc.

They are talking about a girl ten years old, named Anna Smith, in Kenosha, Wis., who has a strange and voracious appetite. She will devour a dozen candles as fast as they are handed to her, and has eaten twenty raw potatoes in as many minutes. With people looking on, she ate two pounds of butter and the same of uncooked bacon, and then finished with a pound loaf of bread. At another time she ate two dozen large pickles, a pound of lard, and a pound of honey in the comb. Like a shark, she is always hungry, and if she ever gets a husband he will have to hump himself to get her enough to eat.

A West Side New York woman who wished to entertain a great deal, one day wondered why her guests always seemed so uncomfortable. "It is because of your clocks," said a candid friend. "There are three within hearing distance of your drawing-room that strike. I don't know of anything that

makes company feel quite so uncomfortable as to hear a clock strike. Somehow it is bound to give the impression that we have outstayed our welcome, and the hostess is anxious to get rid of us. Of course, that is purely a matter of fancy, yet somehow a striking clock always seems to say, 'You'd better be going.' The wise hostess knows that, and if she wants her callers to be thoroughly comfortable she shuns a clock that strikes."

The horse must look to his laurels, as a number of odd competitors for his place as the friend of man are springing up. At Andheim, a German settlement in Southern California, ostriches have been trained to draw light four-wheeled traps. One of these birds, so harnessed, has traveled a mile in three minutes, or at a rate of twenty miles an hour. The African zebra was formerly regarded as being too wild and vicious to be of use in harness, but time has changed this, and now in British East Africa any number of zebras can be purchased, ready trained to bit and bridle. The zebra will be found most useful in Africa and India, as it is exceedingly strong, a fast trotter, and immune from many diseases which attack horses. Perhaps the oddest animal in harness is the wild boar, which is driven by a French peasant at Montlucon. It is now three years old, and is able to draw a small two-wheeled cart. As a bit is of no use, the reins are attached to the animal's eye-teeth.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES.

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Higgins, I was in such a frame of mind that I was beside myself." "If I was as sweet as you are I would endeavor to be in that frame of mind all the time."

"Yes, sir, your daughter loves me. It was a case of love at first sight." "First sight, eh? I must have her consult an oculist at once."

Aunt—And have you been all that long way alone? Niece—Yes, auntie. Aunt—Then how is it you went out with an umbrella and came back with a walking stick?

Patience—How did the report of Peggy's engagement get out? She said she hasn't whispered it to a soul? Patrice—No, she didn't; she used a megaphone!

Count (to his son, who wishes to marry)—Don't be rash, Alwin. Beauty fades, you know. Son—Yes, but one can come to the end of money as well.

"I got ter be mo' keerful in de future," said Brother Dickey; "I 'clar I has!" "Why, what's happened now?" "Well, I only prayed fer rain 'bout two hours en a half, en ef dey didn't take en send a regular deluge dat come nigh drownin' der whole settlement! Providence always gives me mo'n what I axes fer!"

"Is this a good 10-cent cigar?" "No, sir. That cigar is Connecticut filled and Wisconsin wrapped. It's worse than a second. We don't sell a decent cigar for 10 cents because our trade is mostly transient and isn't worth holding. We have a fair 10-cent cigar at 35 cents or three for a dollar."

"Maybelle, has Harry ever kissed you?" "Just once, Gladdy; but he begged so hard I couldn't refuse him." "When was it?" "Last Thursday night." "Where did he kiss you?" "In this town, of course." "That doesn't answer my question. Where did he kiss you?" "At home." "That isn't what I want to know. Where did he kiss you?" "In the conservatory." "That is another evasion. Where did he kiss you?" "Er—in the dark." "You may just as well tell me the straight truth. Where did he kiss you?" "On the back of my hand, if you think it's any of your business."

THE ORDEAL

By JOHN SHERMAN.

Soon after the gold-fever broke out I went to California.

I first tried my luck at digging gold myself, but soon tired of that; and, believing I could make money faster and with less labor, I opened a kind of grocery and provision store.

My store, as I dignified my place of trade, consisted of a rude skeleton of poles, with a sufficiency of cheap canvas drawn over them and pinned down to the earth.

In the dry season it was very dusty, and everybody seemed to be dry with a thirst which mere water would not quench.

If a man was successful he wanted whisky to bring his body up to the altitude of his spirits; if unsuccessful, he wanted whisky to bring his spirits up to the altitude of his body.

My store being the headquarters of that locality for whisky and provisions, I was brought into contact with nearly every specimen of gentlemen, laborers, mountaineers, gamblers, thieves, and assassins. Of course, I had a chance to study all sorts of faces to my heart's content.

I wanted to get hold of what is termed a character—one that would really puzzle you to tell what to think of him.

Among the many such a one I at length found.

At a casual glance there was nothing to distinguish him from the herd. He came in quietly, unobtrusively purchased a quantity of flour, pork, and tea, paid for the same in gold-dust, and went out about his business.

He repeated his visits at different intervals before he attracted my attention to anything peculiar in his appearance, and then I should have been at a loss to say what I saw more in him at last than at first.

He was apparently about twenty-five years of age, of medium height, and slender figure, and of a dark complexion.

He was quiet, had nothing to say, except about the business he came on, got what he wanted, paid for what he got, and generally retired with some civility.

And yet he began to attract my attention at last, and I began to wonder why. At all events, he had begun to interest me in some way, and that led me into a closer scrutiny of the man.

One day, I scarcely know how, I touched upon the general superstitions of mankind, and to my surprise I saw that he was interested.

His eye changed expression, and brightened, and emitted a strange and peculiar gleam. I now bethought me that I had never seen one like it, and I looked in at that opening and saw that the soul of that man was a dark one.

A nameless fear came over me. I felt an internal shudder.

No wonder I had not been able to read him before; the man had been wearing an impenetrable mask.

I now had the key to the mystery, and to him, and I used it.

He was interested in superstitions; he was superstitious himself.

I had accidentally thrown him off his guard and read his soul.

Fear only made him so; and in one of his iron nature fear could only arise from the self-convicted knowledge of a past wicked deed.

The man was even then a criminal.

One dark night I was startled from my sleep by wild, prolonged shrieks, and cries of:

"Murder! murder! Help! help!"

I jumped up, seized my revolvers, and darted out into the open air.

The cries and screams still continued, coming from a point on the bend of the river about a hundred rods below.

In a minute I was joined by five others, all well armed, and together we ran as hard as we could to the place from which the alarm proceeded.

When we arrived there at least thirty men were collected in and around the tent of the dark man I have been describing, and he himself it was who had given the alarm.

His partner and companion had been murdered and robbed, and he himself had been slightly cut across the face and gashed on the left arm, and he was all excitement, lamenting his dearest friend, and vowing vengeance against the assassin.

"Who has done this fearful deed?" cried the dark man as he knelt at the head of the victim. "Oh, that I knew the villain!"

It was some time before we could get at the particulars, and then we learned that both had been sleeping side by side, when an unknown robber had crawled under the light canvas, stabbed one to the heart, and taken a large bag of gold from under his head.

With this he was escaping, when the present narrator awoke and seized him, and received the wounds which had compelled him to relinquish his hold.

Lights were brought, and there, sure enough, was the sanguinary confirmation of all that had been related.

I shall make no attempt to portray the intense excitement, the wild rage and consternation which this daring murder occasioned.

Every man felt that if the assassin escaped without his just punishment there would no longer be security for anyone in our hitherto quiet and peaceful valley, and solemn oaths were taken to hang the wretch, if found, upon the nearest tree.

A large reward was offered for his detection, and every gambler that had ever been seen about there was more or less suspected, and I believe that had any man been arrested on the following day he would have been hanged first and tried afterwards.

I said less than any, for I had my own suspicions, and I contrived my plot in secret and made a confidant of no one.

The murdered young man was as decently buried as surrounding circumstances would permit, and his companion—my superstitious friend—grew more moody with grief, refused to work his "lead" any more, and proposed selling off his rocker and tools and quitting the country altogether.

I think he would have gone at once, only that I told him it would not look well to leave without an effort to discover the murderer, as some people might be malicious enough to say he knew something of the matter, and so get him into trouble.

He turned very pale and declared he would stay a year if he thought by that means he could discover the assassin of his friend.

On the second afternoon following the tragedy almost every individual in the vicinity—the friend of the murdered man among the rest—assembled at my store at my particular request.

I had told them I had something to communicate concerning the foul deed, and I thought it not unlikely I should give them some clew to the assassin.

When all had collected and arranged themselves, as I had directed, in a semi-circle before my door, I came forward, holding in my hand an egg.

Then I made them a short speech on the various superstitions of mankind, which I contended had their origin in mysterious facts; and among other things I mentioned how the ghosts of their victims would often haunt the murderers, compelling them to reveal their crimes, and how it had been asserted that if the guilty wretch should place his hand upon the body of the man he had secretly slain the wound would bleed afresh.

"And now, gentlemen," I continued, "I hold in my hand as sure a test as any I have named. This simple egg, so fair to the view, contains the murderer's secret. Let him but take it in his hand and the frail shell will crumble to pieces, and show to all that it is filled with the blood of his victim. The murderer of the young man we buried yesterday may be among us; but only the guilty need fear the trial—the innocent will surely pass the ordeal unharmed."

As I said this I fixed my gaze upon my dark visitor, my suspected man.

The egg began its round.

Some took it gravely, some lightly, some turned slightly pale, and some laughed outright.

But on it went, and came nearer to the man for whom it was intended.

"It is your turn now," I said, at length, in a cold, stern tone.

"Mine?" he answered, with a ghastly attempt at a smile. "Why—why should I—take it? Poor Wilson was my—my friend!"

"Let him prove so now," I said. "All eyes are upon you. Take the ordeal, and prove your innocence—if you can!"

He made one despairing effort to be calm, gulped his breath like one choking, and seized the fatal egg with trembling hands.

The next moment it was crushed in atoms, and his hands were wet and stained as if with human gore.

A despairing shriek came from the lips of the guilty wretch, and falling rather than sinking down upon his knees, he cried out:

"God of mercy, forgive me! I did kill him! I did kill him! for his gold—his gold—his gold! Oh, Heaven, forgive me!"

"And how many before him?" demanded I.

"Three—three! Oh, mercy, forgive me!"

There was another wild yell, or rather howl, of fury—a rush like wolves upon their prey—and the poor wretch was seized, almost torn limb from limb, and dragged furiously away.

In less than ten minutes from his confession he was dangling from a neighboring tree—swinging by his neck.

I will only add that, believing him guilty, I had previously prepared the egg, expecting to see him crush it through his superstitious fears of a supernatural discovery.

THE CONSPIRATORS

"Why do you come to this ghostly chamber?"

"Ghostly!" echoed the man addressed. "Why, there's not such a chamber as this for cheerfulness in the whole castle! We might plot against the old duke here till the day of doom, and nobody be the wiser. It's the only chamber in which I can feel absolutely safe from sliding panels. If that is not enough to make a man feel cheerful, I do not know what is. And, then, I'm sure there's enough color in the old cardinal there to make it look as gay here as a gala day."

The first speaker shuddered.

"It makes my blood run cold to look at him," he said. "Was ever such a stern, threatening face put on canvas before?"

"Bah! Remington, we need not fear the painted cardinal. It's the living earl that is dangerous. And now let us to business. Have you seen the fellow?"

"Yes," answered Remington; "he laughs at two hundred pounds—he'll do it for five hundred, and not a sixpence less."

"You are sure the earl means to marry? You are sure that it is best to hurry matters? Wait a little and see. You don't want to murder him if he'll only give you a chance to take your own at his death."

"His whole heart is set on an heir," gloomily returned Barrowdell. "Nor is that all; the heir's mother is chosen. Lady Imogen Lance will come here next week as the Countess of Abbington."

"Ah!" breathed Remington, turning with a violent start from the cardinal to his companion. "Then there is indeed no time to lose. It must be done——"

"To-morrow night!" interposed Barrowdell, looking straight into his confederate's eyes. "The man is here; I suppose you brought him with you?"

"Yes. He only hesitates on——"

"Let him hesitate no longer," again interposed Barrowdell, speaking rapidly and impatiently. "Here," taking a purse from his bosom, "is the two hundred. When the deed is done he shall have the remainder."

Remington pushed back the offered purse.

"The whole in advance—those are his terms. And when you assume your title you are to pay him, in addition, one thousand pounds."

As Remington spoke, his gaze, by a strange species of fascination, went back to the cardinal's picture. The next instant he leaned forward and clutched Barrowdell's arm in a vise-like grasp, his starting eyes glaring wildly at the face.

"By the heavens above us!" he gasped, huskily. "They moved! they move from your face to mine! from mine to yours, and then back! See! they are looking straight at me now!"

Without one word, Barrowdell sprang to his feet.

The next moment he had seized Remington's chair and whirled it and its occupant straight round.

"I believe you are losing your senses!" he exclaimed. "Here, take this," rapidly counting out the three hundred pounds, "and deliver it at once. I agree to his terms."

With these words he placed the amount in the purse, and that in the shaking hand of his companion.

As soon as he saw it safely disposed of, he extinguished the light, and taking Remington by the arm, led him from the chamber into a low, dimly-lighted stone passage.

They had gone but a few steps when both were suddenly assaulted and secured.

In five minutes they were being borne rapidly away from the passage, along narrow passages, through vault-like chambers they were hurried, till finally they were set down on a stone floor, and their freedom once more restored.

Simultaneously they cast off the shrouding cloaks.

Standing close before them was the Earl of Abbington.

Without a word he measured them haughtily from head to foot. Then, with a slight gesture to one of the waiting servants, he moved toward the wall. One servant moved swiftly ahead of him, the other two seized the mute and astounded prisoners. For an instant the earl stood still. Then he moved aside a pace.

Barrowdell was hurried unceremoniously close to the wall.

He had scarcely reached it when he fell back with a smothered cry. The servant drew him quickly aside, and Remington was put in his place. He too fell back.

The earl haughtily faced them again.

"You have," he said, "been looking through the cardinal's eye, as I have looked many and many a night before this. You see the lighted chamber, you see the table, the chairs which you just occupied, but you do not see your infamous selves! I have long suspected you, my kinsman, and I have tested you. Heretofore I have had no intention of marrying! Now I have! Within a year an heir shall gladden this old castle. You, Barrowdell, would only disgrace the earldom."

The earl kept his word.

Within a year an heir did gladden the old castle.

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